

Peres refuses Musa trip to nuclear plant

CAIRO (AFP) — Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres has refused to allow his Egyptian counterpart Amr Musa to visit a nuclear plant in Dimona in southern Israel, a Saudi paper reported here Sunday. A senior official from the Egyptian foreign ministry would not confirm or deny the report to AFP. But he added that "Egypt has always called for the Dimona reactor to be submitted to international inspection and Israel has rejected this demand." According to the Saudi daily Al Sharq Al Awsat, Mr. Peres refused the visit on Thursday during talks in Cairo aimed at defusing a row over Israel's nuclear programme. Mr. Musa asked him "for the third time" since the start of the dispute "to visit the Dimona reactor" in the southern desert. When he asked why Mr. Peres was against such a visit, the Israeli minister replied with a laugh: "You'll see there's nothing there." But Mr. Peres agreed in principle to hold talks on submitting Israeli nuclear installations to international inspection two years after concluding peace treaties with all the countries in the region, including Iran, Iraq and Libya, the paper added.

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Jordan opens customs posts with W. Bank

AMMAN (AFP) — Jordan has set up two customs posts at crossing points with the West Bank to promote trade with the Palestinians, officials said Sunday. The two posts were opened on the King Hussein and Prince Abdullah bridges, both north of the Dead Sea and leading into the West Bank. A third post has also been opened in the southern Dead Sea port of Aqaba, 350 kilometres south of Amman, to develop trade in the free zone there. Jordan and the self-rule Palestinian Authority signed economic accords on Jan. 26 to boost trade. Meanwhile, a Jordanian delegation travelled to the self-rule Gaza Strip on Sunday to prepare to open a representation bureau. The delegation is due to choose a headquarters for the bureau. Once it is opened Jordan will become the third Arab country to be represented in Gaza after Morocco and Egypt. Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti is to visit Gaza to attend the official opening at a date yet to be fixed, officials said.

Egypt suffers 'brain drain'

CAIRO (AFP) — More than 300 nuclear experts have left Egypt in a brain drain that began when President Hosni Mubarak suspended development of the country's nuclear energy programme a decade ago, a paper said Sunday. Mohammad Abdul Rahman Salama, one such expert, told the weekly Rose Al Youssef that the drain of "Egyptian scientists began after a political decision to suspend the development of the nuclear programme in 1986 through fear of a Chernobyl-style nuclear leak." Before Mr. Mubarak's decision, a large nuclear reactor was to be built west of Alexandria on Egypt's Mediterranean coast. Fawzi Hamad, former president of the Egyptian Atomic Energy Commission, said since 1986 nearly "250 academics went to the United States, while dozens of others went to Canada and Austria." Mr. Hamad attributed the exodus to the modest wages paid to experts in Egypt and the limited budget allocated to nuclear development.

Policeman, daughter killed in Algeria

ALGIERS (AFP) — A policeman and his three-year-old daughter were shot dead by an armed gang at Haouch Moubouh, near the coastal town of Bordj Al Kiffan. Algerian security forces said Sunday. Al Hadj Tagerout, 41, and his daughter Souhila died when they were attacked by armed men as they sat in a vehicle on Saturday night, the security forces said. It was the first time since the start of Ramadan that the security forces have announced the killing of one of their members. Earlier, newspapers reported that a group of villagers who organised themselves into a self-defence force killed the head of an Islamic extremist group in revenge for the murders of three of their people (see page 12).

Open-air prayers banned in S. Egypt

MINYA (AFP) — Open-air prayers will be banned for Eid Al Fitr holiday in the southern Egyptian stronghold of Islamic militants, police said Sunday. Prayers at public squares across Minya will be banned on Thursday, the end of Ramadan, to stop gatherings of Islamic militants, they said. The Eid Al Fitr prayers usually take place in the open and not just in mosques as happens during most of the year. Barriers were already being set up around public squares. Militants, who have waged a three-year campaign of violence against the secular government, usually stage a show of force during the Eid holiday, especially in southern Egypt.

Bishop urges prayer for bomb trial judges

BEIRUT (AFP) — A senior Lebanese Christian cleric on Sunday urged worshippers to pray for the "enlightenment" of prosecutors investigating a church bombing which killed 11 people one year ago. Maronite Bishop Beshara Al Raiss issued the appeal to hundreds of people, including government officials and Parliament members who packed the Church of Our Lady of Deliverance, northeast of Beirut, which was ripped apart by a bomb on Feb. 27, 1994. "Bringing the judicial system into dispute is much worse than the massacre itself," Bishop Rai told the congregation. He urged them to pray "for the enlightenment of the judges" so that they could determine who was responsible for carrying out the brutal bombing during Lenten service one year ago killing 11 worshippers and wounding more than 50. Former Christian warlord Samir Geagea and other members of his disbanded Lebanese Force (LF) militia are currently on trial for involvement in the church bombing.

Saudi Arabia, Yemen sign border accord

MECCA (Agencies) — Saudi Arabia and Yemen on Sunday signed a declaration of principles mapping out steps to settle a 60-year-old border dispute that has erupted into armed conflict in the past. The two countries, after more than one month of difficult talks in Saudi Arabia, signed an 11-point declaration setting up negotiating teams to demarcate land and sea boundaries as well as help normalise ties. Saudi Defence Minister Prince Sultan Ben Abdul Aziz said a new page had opened in their relations which became strained during the 1991 Gulf war when Riyadh accused Sanaa of backing Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

But Prince Sultan warned the negotiations could take up to a year. "The borders to be marked out stretch more than 2,000 kilometres," he said. Saudi Arabia's King Fahd and Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh would sign a final accord, he said. Sunday's declaration was signed by an adviser to King Fahd, Ibrahim Al Anzari, and Yemeni Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Kader Bajamal capping talks which opened in Riyadh on Jan. 23. Tension on the border spilled over into violence with several armed clashes, the last on Jan. 10 when more than 50 people were killed, according to diplomats.

Israeli gunboats appear to scale down fishing blockade

SIDON (Agencies) — Fishermen sailed out to sea early Sunday off this port city and menacing Israeli gunboats disappeared from the horizon, signs that Israel was easing a ban on fishing off Lebanon's southern coast. However, the blockade remained in force on about 50 kilometres of coastline, from the border town of Naqoura to the oil harbour of Zahran, about 10 kilometres south of Sidon.

Israel imposed a fishing ban off the southernmost port city of Tyre Feb. 8. On Thursday, Israeli gunboats used their machineguns to scare off fishermen and expand the blockade further north to Zahran and Sidon, the provincial capital of South Lebanon. Lebanon has appealed for U.S. and international help in getting Israel to end the blockade, which has deprived 1,300 families of their livelihood. The United States has urged all sides to exercise restraint.

There has been growing suspicion in Lebanon that Israel seeks by applying pressure on Beirut to segregate Lebanon from Syria in the Middle East peace negotiations with the Jewish state. There was no word from

Islam, they agreed to set up within 30 days a committee which will renew the boundary markers from the Red Sea to Jabal Al Thar, north-east of Sanaa.

More talks will be held later to set out ways to demarcate "the rest of the border" eastward to Oman, which Yemen had demanded.

The dispute has focused on three provinces bordering northwest Yemen assigned to Saudi control by a treaty in 1934.

Sunday's declaration also stated that the two neighbours are attached to the "legitimate and binding nature" of the treaty, which Sanaa had argued had expired in 1992 although it agreed to use it as a basis for negotiations.

A top-level joint military committee will be also set up to monitor the situation on the ground and avoid any conflict in the border areas. Yemen accused Saudi Arabia of massing troops along the border last month.

A ministerial committee will also be created to "promote economic, trade and cultural relations between the two countries." Some 500,000 Yemenis work in Saudi Arabia.

The two sides did not set down any means of arbitration should their negotiations hit an impasse.

Prince Sultan Ben Abdul told a press conference that "arbitration would be the last resort. We want to assure our

people that we are not the supporters of dictators or hegemony and that arbitration is laid down in the Koran."

President Saleh said on Tuesday he was ready to take the border dispute to the International Court of Justice in The Hague.

The two sides chose a symbolic date signing the declaration on the "Night of Destiny," when the Koran was revealed to the Prophet Mohammad in the year 610.

Following are the main points of the declaration signed by Yemen and Saudi Arabia.

1. The two parties state their attachment to the legitimate and binding nature of the 1934 Taif accord and its appendices.
2. A joint committee will be set up within 30 days to renew the border boundary markers from the Red Sea as far as Jabal Al Thar (north-east of Sanaa).
3. The Saudi-Yemeni committee set up in January by negotiators from the two countries are to continue their mission to establish measures and define stages for the delimitation of the rest of the border and the means of arbitration in case the conflict continues.
4. Joint committees will be set up to negotiate the delimitation of the maritime borders from the Red Sea in line with international law.

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'Jordan could get privileged status with EU, but internal changes needed to meet challenge'

AMMAN (J.T.) — The European Union (EU) has promised to enter an agreement with Jordan in 1995 under which the Kingdom would have the same privileged status with the EU as Morocco, Tunisia and Israel, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan revealed Sunday.

The Crown Prince, addressing a meeting with the Jordanian Federation of Chambers of Commerce, also said that although the citizen was unable to see the immediate dividends of peace, Jordan was getting support.

The Crown Prince said the EU promise was made to him by the president of the EU Executive Commission during a visit he paid to Brussels. The signing of such an agreement

would mean a new beginning for Jordan, he said. The Crown Prince asked whether Jordan was in a position to meet the challenges posed by such an agreement.

He said Jordan would implement a phased liberalisation that would involve changes in legislation and practices to make its economy contribute to the regional economy and become part of the world economy in a 12-year period.

The Crown Prince called for increased coordination in the private sector and emphasised the need to have "a reference point" for Jordanian businessmen. He also emphasised the need for easy access to and flow of business and related information among the various regions of the King-

dom.

The Crown Prince also reviewed preparations for an economic conference to be held in Amman in October as a follow-up to a similar meeting held in Casablanca, Morocco, on the Middle East and North Africa last year.

Jordan could be named to host a regional economic and development working group, and "this group might develop into a consultative nucleus coinciding with the establishment of the regional development bank," said the Crown Prince.

He said the Jordanian private sector should crystallise clear objectives through the various workshops and meetings to be held ahead of the October meeting. Issues where such definite positions should be crystallised in-



clude banking, investment, the free trade zones, infrastructure, and

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Abdul Meguid arrives for talks on Arab issues

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Arab League Secretary-General Esmat Abdul Meguid arrived here late Sunday on a three-day visit which will focus on efforts to restore Arab solidarity and reviving the Arab League's role in resolving inter-Arab differences.

Dr. Abdul Meguid, who was received upon arrival by Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti, said his talks would cover the general Arab situation and the latest developments in the Arab and international scenes as well as the obstacles in the Arab-Israeli peace process.

In comments to reporters, Dr. Abdul Meguid, former Egyptian foreign minister who became Arab League secretary-general in May 1991, said he would also discuss the role of the Arab League at this stage.

The Associated Press quoted unidentified officials as saying Dr. Abdul Meguid was involved in efforts to arrange a meeting between Mr. Kabariti and his Kuwaiti counterpart, Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah, on the fringes of an Arab League council meeting in Cairo on March 22.

Jordan currently chairs the council, and Dr. Abdul Meguid's visit here, in response to an invitation extended by Mr. Kabariti early this year, is also related to preparations for the Cairo meeting.

In his arrival comments, Mr. Abdul Meguid referred to inter-Arab differences and said:

"We may have different opinions. There is no harm in this. It is in our interest to meet, discuss and prepare the agenda for the forthcoming meeting of the Arab League Council on March 22."

On efforts to heal inter-

Arab rifts, he said: "We have called for Arab reconciliation, emphasising that frank discussions of all issues were a must before reconciliation. I personally think that this is an important issue for every Arab and that reconciliation is inevitable."

Dr. Abdul Meguid is paying his second visit to Jordan after taking over the helm of the Arab League.

The former Egyptian minister recently visited several Arab countries in an effort to advance Arab reconciliation through an Arab summit, but said after talks in Kuwait that prospects of an early meeting of Arab heads of states were not very bright.

The last Arab summit was held in August 1990, a few days after Iraq invaded Kuwait. The summit ended with a deep split in the 22-member Arab League between those who supported and opposed a military solution to end Iraq's occupation

of Kuwait.

Chadli Klibi, a Tunisian diplomat who headed the league for several years, resigned shortly thereafter in protest against the absence of a united Arab stand towards the Gulf crisis.

Subsequently, the headquarters of the Arab League was moved from Tunisia to Egypt and Dr. Abdul Meguid was elected to succeed Dr. Klibi.

Arab diplomats believe that Jordan, in its capacity as the current chairman of the Arab League Council, would seek to give a fresh impetus to efforts to end Arab differences and restore Arab solidarity to a level that is required to meet the challenges posed by the prospects of peace in the Middle East after decades of conflict and bloodshed.

Mr. Kabariti said early this month that the Cairo meeting

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Artillery exchanges in Kabul breach truce

KABUL (AFP) — Forces loyal to Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani and Shiite Hezb-e-Wahdat faction exchanged intense rocket and artillery fire here overnight Saturday, breaching a U.N.-sponsored ceasefire.

According to the government-controlled Radio Kabul, monitored in Islamabad late Sunday, six persons were killed and 12 wounded in the artillery barrage.

The attack, which targeted government forces, damaged several houses in Kabul, it said.

From the sound of the explosions, the attacks appeared centered in areas controlled by Abdul Ali Mazari, head of the pro-Islamic Hezb-e-Wahdat faction, in the southwestern part of the capital.

Aloni proposes an exchange of Israeli land for W. Bank areas

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — An Israeli cabinet minister proposed Sunday that Israel give the Palestinians a strip of land in its southern desert in exchange for West Bank areas around Jerusalem where it is still building settlements.

The government "must give something in exchange," Communications Minister Shulamit Aloni told Israel Radio. "We are going to give land. Peace has to be given and take, not just take."

The idea that Israel give up land that the Palestinians were not even asking for was unusual. It was rejected by Israel and the Palestinians alike.

Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) are negotiating over the future of the West Bank and Gaza.

"The government has confiscated land belonging to Palestinians on the West

Bank to enlarge settlements around Jerusalem," the left-wing Meretz party leader noted.

"It would be proper that in exchange we offer land to enlarge the Gaza Strip," said Ms. Aloni, who supports the creation of a Palestinian state alongside Israel.

"We must understand that we are dealing with partners and that we cannot take without giving."

Ms. Aloni also said an exchange of land would ease overcrowding on the self-rule strip, where more than 800,000 Palestinians live.

Meretz is the junior partner in the government coalition and has three ministers. Ms. Aloni raised the idea, aimed at breaking a stalemate in peace talks, to placate Palestinians enraged at Israel's continued building in the occupied West Bank.

"It's sort of an exchange of lands," she told Israel Radio.

"The only compensation we can give is in the area between the Gaza Strip and Eilat," a Red Sea port city at Israel's southernmost tip.

Government spokesman Uri Dromi said that Ms. Aloni's proposal did not reflect the government's position.

Israel seized and "annexed" Jerusalem's eastern sector in 1967, but the Palestinians want it for the capital of their hoped-for state. Palestinians argue that Israeli construction in the Jerusalem area is aimed at creating facts on the ground before negotiations scheduled for 1996 on the Jerusalem issue.

Ms. Aloni said Palestinians' opposition to the construction might diminish if they were offered a slice of land from the Gaza Strip towards the Red Sea resort of Eilat. Some of the crowded

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U.S. warns it could veto moves to ease Iraq sanctions

KUWAIT CITY (Agencies) — The United States warned here Sunday it could veto any moves for a "premature" lifting of U.N. sanctions imposed on Iraq after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Madeleine Albright told a press conference here that a veto would be a last resort as it appeared enough countries would back Washington in the United Nations next month.

Ms. Albright, on a mission to build a "seven-country blocking coalition" against French and Russian moves to ease sanctions, left for the Czech republic and is also expected in Italy, Argentina and Honduras.

She has also visited London, which along with Washington has overruled

a rejection of easing the sanctions until Iraq complies in full with U.N. resolutions on disarmament, returning Kuwaiti prisoners and property.

The envoy arrived here Sunday during the fourth anniversary of Kuwait's liberation following a visit to Oman, which she said had backed the U.S. stand despite its previous calls to ease the embargo.

Mr. Albright said at the airport before her departure she had delivered a personal message from President Bill Clinton to the Emir, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah.

"The president made clear our determination to ensure that Iraq complies with all its obligations before there can be any action to modify the sanctions regime," Ms.

Albright said.

"I'm encouraged that a solid core of U.N. Security Council members will continue to insist that Iraq abide by all its obligations before there can be a relaxation of sanctions," she said.

"We hope on the basis of what I'm learning on this trip not to have to use the veto, that we will in fact have a seven-country blocking coalition ... but if necessary we will," she said.

The United Nations will be reviewing the sanctions imposed on Iraq at its regular two-monthly-review in mid-March.

The two-hour Albright visit coincided with a quiet, uneventful fourth anniversary of the liberation of Kuwait.

proud and thrilled to be here in Kuwait today," Ms. Albright told reporters after she met with the Emir.

She said that in his message to Sheikh Jaber, Mr. Clinton "made clear our determination to ensure that Iraq complies with all its obligations before there can be any action to modify the sanctions regime."

Under U.N. rules, a motion before the Security Council can be approved only if at least nine of the body's 15 member nations vote for it. Any of the five permanent members can wield a veto.

Baghdad blames the sanctions for diseases, malnutrition and poverty and says it has complied with demands for the destruction of its weapons for mass destruc-

tion.

France and Russia, both permanent members of the Security Council have indicated a readiness to push for lifting the embargo.

On her rides to and from the Emir's palace, Ms. Albright did not see any festi-

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Obituaries for peace process are premature, Israel says

TEL AVIV (AFP) — After a week of dire Palestinian warnings that the peace process was moribund, Israel insisted it was very much alive and even making slow progress despite months of delay.

As Yasser Arafat fought to rally his increasingly sceptical troops at a tense meeting of the PLO executive committee in Cairo on Tuesday, just across the city Israeli and Palestinian negotiators struck another small deal.

It was the second mini-agreement in a week as the two sides stumble towards an agreement to hold the first Palestinian elections on the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"The process with the Palestinians is not dead, on the contrary it's alive," government spokesman Uri Dromi told AFP.

"We are still making progress, there are never-ending contacts," he said after an unprecedented series of summits and meetings in the Middle East, Europe and the United States to keep the process on track.

"There are setbacks once in a while, but it's an ongoing process," Mr. Dromi said.

"We have a common goal, to implement the declaration of principles. We differ how to do it and at what pace, but basically we are moving forward to an accepted goal."

Israel's refusal to redeploy outside built-up Palestinian areas on the West Bank or even negotiate the redeployment until it considers that security has improved lies at the root of the PLO's anger.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin repeats over and over again that Israel will finally implement the second phase of autonomy — redeploy-



Yitzhak Rabin

ment and elections which were scheduled to take place by last July 13.

"There is no other alternative and the government of Israel is determined to continue the peace process," Foreign Minister Shimon Peres vowed Thursday.

Despite the obstacles, there are signs that Israel is readying for a gradual pull-back.

It emerged during the week that border police are already replacing army soldiers in three West Bank towns and will take over in two more soon.

The paramilitary force's commander, Yitzhak Aharonovitch, said police had "successfully" taken over some duties from regular troops in Hebron, Jenin and Nablus. Bethlehem and Tulkarem are next.

With Jericho already under Palestinian self-rule that covers all the main West Bank towns except Ramallah.

Police Minister Moshe Shahal wants to take away

full control of the West Bank from the military as a precursor to the arrival of Palestinian security forces.

"This is a very positive development which goes together with the army's redeployment scheduled by the Oslo autonomy agreements," said Mr. Shahal's spokesman.

Israel's proposal to devolve municipal and economic power over Jenin to Mr. Arafat's self-rule authority as an interim stage towards redeployment was rejected by Arafat.

He demanded an overall agreement for the West Bank and control over security too.

But the Israel-appointed mayor of Jenin, Abdullah Lahul, admitted that 2,000 members of the Palestinian police are discreetly at work in and around the town.

And the pattern is repeated across the occupied territory.

Israel has turned a blind eye although Palestinian police are restricted to Jericho and Gaza under the autonomy agreement.

The Palestinian National Authority also revealed that the force, limited to 9,000 in the agreement, has swollen to 16,000. It is set to increase by another 2,000.

Israel was not best pleased at being accused by the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) executive committee of a deliberate policy to delay self-rule, nor at a new attempt to internationalise the dispute over Jewish settlements.

But officials found comfort in Mr. Arafat's personal pledge to pursue peace, despite a loss of support among Palestinians, and from indications that his authority is now taking pains to halt violence.

Franco-Italian plane demonstrated in Amman

AMMAN (J.T.) — A 60-seater passenger plane jointly manufactured by France and Italy was displayed at Amman's Marka airport Sunday and inspected by His Royal Highness Prince Faisal Ben Al Hussein.



His Royal Highness Prince Faisal on Sunday inspects a new Franco-Italian plane (Petra photo)

The ART-72 plane, which costs \$15 million, had landed here for a demonstration upon an invitation by Royal Jordanian (RJ). The national airline is selecting new planes to be operated on relatively short routes like Aqaba, Alexandria, Beirut and Damascus, according to an airline official.

Prince Faisal and Jordanian officials flew over Amman aboard the plane, which earlier in the day made a flight over parts of southern Jordan.

The Prince and officials were briefed by the plane's captain on the qualities of

the aircraft. RJ plans to purchase at least two small size planes for the purpose, the official said.

Nader Dahabi, RJ president and chief executive

officer, said earlier this month that the airline was studying various small planes seating between 30 and 60 passengers to be used on domestic flights

between Amman and Aqaba and between Queen Alia International Airport and Marka Airport, a move which will allow the airline to operate twice daily

flights between Amman and Aqaba.

The French and Italian ambassadors flew aboard the plane in its demonstration flights around Jordan.

Iran favours extending NPT

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran said Saturday that it supported extending the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and that Russia had promised to continue helping Tehran develop "peaceful" nuclear energy despite U.S. pressure.

Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati told Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Georgy Mamedov here that Iran believed in extending the NPT due for renewal in New York in April.

But Mr. Velayati said the NPT should be "observed in a spirit of sincerity" and complained that Israel has opposed signing it despite having a complete nuclear arsenal, the official IRNA news agency reported.

He urged Russia to use its influence "as a big state... having access to nuclear energy" to prevent non-signatory states from jeopardising the security of other nations.

Mr. Mamedov, who arrived here late Friday, was to try to persuade Tehran to sign a renewal of the NPT, diplomats said.

Moscow hopes the treaty will be renewed indefinitely and unconditionally at a meeting of all the NPT members in April in New York.

But Iran has backed an Egyptian-led stand by Arab countries which have

threatened not to sign unless Israel also joins up.

Tehran has said it may only accept a limited extension of the treaty, under certain conditions.

IRNA also said Mr. Mamedov gave Mr. Velayati, a message assuring Iran that Russia would not yield to U.S. pressure to stop helping Iran develop nuclear energy.

The message from Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev said "Moscow would not yield to the wish of the big powers" on ties with Tehran, stressing the two countries' "nuclear cooperation was for peaceful use of energy," IRNA said.

Mr. Mamedov arrived from Washington where U.S. officials have voiced strong opposition to a civilian nuclear cooperation pact signed between Russia and Iran in 1993.

The United States accuses Iran of trying to procure weapons of mass destruction — a charge denied by Tehran — and has tried to pressure Russia to stop its cooperation with Iran.

But Russia has so far dismissed the U.S. demands saying that current joint projects have no military application and have been inspected by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Mr. Mamedov will probably stress that any refusal or reservations by Tehran to a renewal of the NPT will make it more difficult for Moscow to resist U.S. pressure and could threaten future cooperation, Russian diplomats here said.

Russia's nuclear energy ministry said Monday that a deal with Iran, worth some \$800 million, had been concluded and 150 Russians were working on a reactor — started but abandoned by Germany during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war — at the Bushehr site on the Gulf.

Mr. Velayati has insisted that Iran respects its commitments under the NPT and challenged Israel to follow suit.

"Experts of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have inspected Iran's installations three times and confirmed each time that Iran does not have nuclear arms," he noted earlier in the week.

He challenged Israel to allow the IAEA to inspect its installations.

Israel, which has never acknowledged reports that it has 200 nuclear warheads, has steadfastly refused to join the NPT so long as Islamic countries such as Iran call for its destruction.

Voice of Palestine or mouthpiece for Arafat?

JERICO (AFP) — Voice of Palestine radio is trying to shake off its former revolutionary image to spread the message of peace but faces accusations that it is merely a mouthpiece for Yasser Arafat.

The radio hit the airwaves on May 11, 1986, less than a year after the crushing defeat of Arab armies in the Middle East war against Israel.

Broadcast from Cairo, Voice of Palestine was the standard bearer of the Palestinian revolution issuing calls to rebellion backed by stirring military marches.

But in the past seven months all that has changed. Now based in the self-rule enclave of Jericho on the occupied West Bank, it presents varied music, discussions on social problems and opinion programmes.

"Our main mission is to put across the Palestinian discussion, that of peace, with all its facets, political, economic and cultural," editor-in-chief Youssef Qazzaz said.

But the Palestinian opposition has charged that the radio has become the mouthpiece of the Palestinian self-rule authority and Mr. Arafat's main Fatah faction.

"They don't call us to ask for our opinion," said Imad Faluji, spokesman for the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas. "We are not boycotting them, we wish they would interview us. We want this radio to be democratic."

According to Palestinian sources, Mr. Arafat last year told the editorial board not to give Hamas a platform any more.

Some listeners in the West Bank agree the radio is limiting itself too much to covering the protocol activities of Mr. Arafat, the head of the Palestinian Authority.

"I listen to Voice of Palestine but I consider it simply a new Arab radio which treats Yasser Arafat as his majesty the king," said Youssef Yacub, a 33-year-old Bethlehem worker.

"In the mornings I can't do without the news on Israel Radio. It is the only way of knowing what is going on."

The director of the Arabic-language service of Israel Radio, Edmond Zhayek, said Voice of Palestine did not present a threat.

"They play excellent music. But as for the news programmes they have to pay more attention and be objective otherwise they could risk losing their audience. The Palestinians are used to democratic tools," Mr. Zhayek said.

But times are hard. "Our means are very limited, technically and financially," Voice of Palestine station director Bassem Abu Sumaysa said.

"We have worked for the past four months without pay," he added, saying the station only had old second-hand equipment donated by Germany.

About 35 journalists, presenters and technicians are crammed into four small rooms in a Jericho house, hoping one day to move to Ramallah, near Jerusalem, if Palestinian self-rule is extended on the rest of the West Bank.

Mr. Abu Sumaysa pointed to a tent outside which he said the station was using "to prepare programmes as the building is too small."

But the station still has loyal listeners.

Taxi-driver Abu Mohammad said: "My heart used to beat every time I heard it coming from afar from Arab countries. Voice of Palestine, voice of the Palestinian revolution."

"Now I'm always tuned into it in Jericho. If a passenger protests, I prefer to switch it off than to tune into Israel Radio."

Local press office

The Palestinian National Authority has allowed the reopening of an Islamic Jihad press office shut in January after two of the group's militants killed 21 Israelis in a suicide bombing, a Palestinian official said on Sunday.

Prosecutor General Khaled Al Kidra said the Al Arafat press office, which issues the Islamic Jihad's Al Istiklal newspaper, reopened on Saturday after investigation showed there was no more need to keep it closed.

Mr. Kidra refused to say if press office director, Alas Fakhri, detained after the Jan. 22 bombing, would be released. "The outcome of investigation would decide this issue," he said.

PLO security officials said they had confiscated material from the Al Arafat office which incited against the Palestinian Authority and Israel.

The Palestinian administration, under pressure from Israel to clamp down on militants, arrested more than 60 people after the bombing.

Netanyahu rides high in the polls

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Right-wing opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu is promising to give Israelis security along with the Palestinian autonomy he once rejected, as he rides a wave of popularity which could sweep him into power in next year's elections.

Although he was firmly against the autonomy accords with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), which launched self-rule in May in the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho, the Likud party leader has stopped calling for an end to the agreements.

And despite being a firm defender of the old dogma of the "indivisibility of the country of Israel" from the Mediterranean to the Jordan Valley," he admits today that the Israeli army's return to the Gaza Strip is unthinkable.

He has become a supporter of Palestinian autonomy on the West Bank, but with a twist.

He completely rejects the idea of an army redeployment from Palestinian centres as is supposed to happen under the 1993 declaration of principles.

Mr. Netanyahu has been using his natural gift as an orator to convince Israelis that he can offer them an alternative to the Labour government of Prime Minister Rabin.

His main weapon is the security fears of a country which expected the peace process to result in a fall in violence, but which has witnessed the opposite: the

deaths of 67 Israelis since the launch of autonomy.

It has led to growing discontent reflected in the government's increasing unpopularity in the opinion polls, and an uncertainty of what road to take next.

A survey published Friday by the daily Yediot Aharonot revealed that Mr. Netanyahu would win 52 per cent of the vote compared to 38 per cent for Mr. Rabin, if elections were held today.

Now Mr. Netanyahu is cashing in on his image as a fighter of "international terrorism" carefully cultivated since he first entered the political arena 12 years ago.

With a strong military background based on his service in an elite commando unit, and always impeccably dressed, he has managed to inspire growing confidence.

"We have to seize the sword with both hands, tear the blinds from our eyes and chase the terrorists out of their holes," he told a recent meeting in Tel Aviv to resounding applause.

This kind of shock therapy is finding an increasing audience, and there is no doubt that as a propagandist he makes good use of the talents which saw him appointed deputy information minister in 1991 serving under former Premier Yitzhak Shamir.

But his rivals in Likud accuse him of lacking strength while his opponents on the left have challenged him to come up with a peace programme to replace the government's.

Mr. Netanyahu, known by the nickname "Bibi" and



Benjamin Netanyahu

born in 1949 in Jerusalem just a year after the creation of Israel, has stressed the importance of Palestinian autonomy on the West Bank.

"The main problem is the West Bank and the only viable solution is a Palestinian self-rule regime which will allow the residents to run their own affairs," he has said.

But he has ruled out any Israeli army redeployment across the region which has formed the basis of all Palestinian autonomy projects debated since 1979 following the 1978 Camp David agreement.

He claims his ideas could win the backing of Jordan and Palestinian notables without identifying them and provoking scepticism in Israel.

Even though Mr. Netanyahu is ahead in the current polls, Israeli elections are not due until November 1996 and he has already once seen his popularity dramatically wax and wane according to the fickle mood of the country's electorate.

Iran worries about Karachi killings

NICOSIA (AP) — Two Iranian dailies Sunday urged Pakistan's Shiite Muslims to stay calm and not retaliate for the killing of 20 Shiites in Karachi Saturday.

The official Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), monitored in Nicosia, quoted the English-language Iran News as saying in an editorial: "The Pakistani Shiites should realise that at this crucial juncture, maintenance of revolutionary calm and self-restraint is to the interest of Islam and Pakistan since any hasty reaction would seriously jeopardise Pakistan's security."

Iran's 60 million population, belonging overwhelmingly to the Shiite branch of Islam. Most of the world's one billion Muslims adhere to the mainstream Sunni sect, which is the majority in Pakistan.

The 20 Shiites slain in Karachi were gunned down by attackers who raked worshippers in two mosques with automatic weapons fire, apparently part of a worsening Shiite-Sunni feud in the

city. That triggered Shiite threats of reprisals. (see page 5).

An estimated 10,000 Shiites, many of them young men wearing masks and brandishing automatic rifles and pistols, attended the funerals.

The shootings were thought to have been in retaliation for a Friday night attack on a Sunni mosque in which two people were killed. Those slayings were blamed on a hard-line Shiite faction, Tehrik-e-Jafaria.

All told, 32 killings were reported in Karachi over the weekend. More than 800 people perished in political and religious violence in Karachi, Pakistan's business capital, last year.

IRNA quoted the Iran News as saying the slaying of Shiites was an attempt by unidentified foreign agents to damage relations between Iran and Pakistan, which have grown close in recent years.

"Tehran expects the Pakistani authorities to arrest the perpetrators of such criminal acts," said the daily Iran News.

Islamabad could not continue abdicating its responsibility... and should take concrete measures to stop a dangerous phenomenon aided an abetted by such outside forces as the Wahabites in Saudi Arabia," it said.

The English-language Tehran Times, which has close relations with the Foreign Ministry, said "the Islamic Republic of Iran... is in a position to offer its mediation efforts to bring this ugly fratricide to an end."

Both newspapers blamed the attacks on Sipah-e-Sahaba, a Sunni organisation with close links with Saudi Arabia, Iran's rival for leadership of the Islamic World.

Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has blamed archenemy India for stirring up the violence.

The Tehran Times called on the Pakistani government to "take concrete measures to stop a dangerous phenomenon... which can destroy the fabric of Pakistani society."

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 73311-19

PROGRAMME TWO

17:40 The Prince Et La Sirène
17:50 Que Le Mielier Gagne
18:00 Marios N2
19:00 News In French
19:15 Carrot De Notes
19:20 Ramadan in the World
19:45 Magazine Zero One
20:00 ALF
20:50 Street Hawk
21:15 By Way of the Stars
22:00 News In English
22:20 Bombardeo
22:59 Feature film "Brewster's Millions"

PRAYER TIMES

06:45 Fajr
06:02 (Sunrise) Duha
11:40 Dhuhar
15:05 Asr
17:24 Maghrib
18:22 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swedish, Tel. 810740
Assembly of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Terranova Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 625041
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 711331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 712561
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 711751
Armenian International Church Tel. 625226
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 664195
The Lutheran Day School Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Temperatures will rise slightly with winds northeasterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman 5/16
Aqaba 11/24
Dead Sea 3/18
Jordan Valley 10/23

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 14, Aqaba 23 Humidity
reading: Amman 63 per cent.
Aqaba 35 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Youssef Rashid 896301
Dr. Jamal Tarif 794710
Dr. Fayed Dabbas 759155
Dr. Abbas Al Hakim 855446
Firas pharmacy 661913
Perdous pharmacy 778336
Al Asena pharmacy 678255
Nadrouh pharmacy 626672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Nadrouh pharmacy 626672
Najib pharmacy 947632

IRBID:
Dr. Ali Al Omari 272032
Aqaba pharmacy (—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Randa Shabin 955710
Khalid pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 773121
Highway Police 845402
Traffic Police 856390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints 877467
Amman Municipality Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repair 623101
Abdel Telephone Repair 661101
Jordan Television 733111
Jordan Radio 744111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 06-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport 06-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khaldi Maternity, J. Ama 6428146
Alkhal Maternity, J. Ama 6424412
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 6641714
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 645845
Al-Musader Hospital 672279
The Islamic, Abdali 66612737
Al-Ahli, Abdali 6641646
Rakha, Al-Muhajreen 7771013
Al-Badli, J. Ashraf 7511126
Army, Marka 80161715
Queen Alia Hospital 63240530
Amal Hospital 674155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital 6428146
Irbid:
Irbid Sina Hospital (09)900560
Al-Hikma Modern Hospital (09)999990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)775555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)772775
Irbid Al-Nadwa Hospital (02)747100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (05)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

07:00 Suma (RJ)
08:30 Jeddah (RJ)
09:00 Damascus (RJ)
09:15 Agaña (RJ)
09:30 Dhahran (RJ)
09:40 New Delhi (RJ)
09:50 Beirut (RJ)
09:55 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:00 Cairo (RJ)
17:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
19:30 Bangkok (RJ)
19:35 Casablanca, Tunis (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

06:45 Khartoum (SD)
06:50 Cairo (SD)
12:35 Muscat, Abu Dhabi (GF)
14:00 Riyadh (TV)
14:30 Kiev (RU)
17:45 Rome (AZ)
17:50 Paris, Damascus (AF)
18:15 Dubai (EK)
23:10 London (BA)
01:30 Amsterdam (KL)

DEPARTURES Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:45 Beirut (RJ)
06:50 Agaña (RJ)
07:00 Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
12:00 Frankfurt, London (RJ)
12:45 Beirut, Dhahran (RJ)
19:45 Bahrain, Dhahran (RJ)
20:40 Damascus (RJ)
21:25 Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
01:45 Abu Dhabi (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

06:00 Istanbul (TK)
06:15 Fuzhou (ME)
18:30 Cairo (MS)
19:30 Bahrain, Abu Dhabi, Muscat (GF)
19:40 Suma (RJ)
19:50 Kuwait (KU)
20:00 Riyadh (TV)
20:15 Dhahran (RJ)
20:20 Amsterdam (KL)
01:30 London (BA)

HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 every Monday
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in lbs per kg.

Apple 700 / 400
Banana 680
Bassam (Mukannar) 620
Cabbage 120 / 60
Carrot 100 / 80
Cauliflower 130 / 70
Cucumber (large) 140 / 100
Cucumbers (small) 280 / 200
Eggplant 170 / 100
Garlic 1100 / 600
Green Beans 400 / 400
Lemon 300 / 200
Marrow (large) 120 / 80
Marrow (small) 200 / 180
Onion (dry) 320 / 200
Onion (green) 450 / 350
Pepper (hot) 850 / 700
Pepper (sweet) 600 / 600
Potato 330 / 220
Radish 140 / 100
Spinach 130 / 70
String Beans 800 / 600
Tomato 210 / 120



Her Majesty Queen Noor Sunday chairs a Services at the King Hussein Medical meeting on the Royal National Children's Centre (photo by George Crystal)

Queen chairs meeting on children's hospital project

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Sunday chaired a meeting on the Royal National Children's Hospital project (RNCH), held at the Royal Court in Amman.

The meeting, which took place at the Royal Court, was attended by the Queen, the King Hussein Medical Centre (HMC), and other officials.

Queen Noor said the meeting was held to discuss the progress of the RNCH project, which is a major initiative to improve the health care for children in Jordan.

She received a donation from Qatar which paid for complete working plans for a national hospital at KHMC; the plans were adopted in 1982, said the statement.

However, due to regional economic and political pressures, the execution of the project was postponed, it said.

Since the shortage of paediatric hospital beds has now become more acute, and nearly half of Jordan's population are below the age of 16, the statement said, a decision was made at the highest political level to build the proposed hospital as soon as possible.

According to the statement in 1993, the government of China approved a soft loan of \$8 million to Jordan for the cost of designing and constructing a section of the RNCH; the Jordanian government would finance the construction of the RNCH outpatient building.

Queen Noor said the statement stressed the need to diversify the sources of funding for the RNCH.

Upon construction, the RNCH will be the first hospital in the Kingdom to meet tertiary, secondary and some local primary health care needs of children in the 0-16 years age group; it will be accessible to all economic strata of Jordan's population, according to the statement.

It will be built at an initial capacity of 131 inpatient beds and will provide medical-surgical, intensive, ambulatory and emergency care. The RNCH will not only be a centre for paediatric medical services, but also a site for graduate medical education of paediatric medical, surgical, dental and allied scientific disciplines, said the statement.

It will also include a centre for the assessment of child development, the treatment of cerebral palsy and will perform a comprehensive programme of family guidance.

The Institute for Child Health and Development (ICHHD), which Queen Noor established in 1985 with the help for the Swedish Save the Children, is the first and only facility in Jordan to monitor and assess child growth and development.

Once the RNCH is constructed, the ICHHD will be affiliated to it and will form its community outreach branch, the statement said.

Queen Noor was received by Minister of Health Aref Batayneh and Director of the Royal Medical Services Yousef Qoussous.

Jordan prepares for 50% possibility of locust invasion via Saudi Arabia

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — There is a 50 per cent possibility that swarms of locusts which have invaded northern parts of Saudi Arabia could cross into the southern regions of Jordan depending on weather conditions and whether or not the Saudi authorities are successful in combating the pest, according to the Ministry of Agriculture.

Last week, the Rome-based U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the FAO Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Middle East informed the ministry that "parts of Tuhama in Saudi Arabia were invaded

by locusts, and that Jordan might be the next stop," said Mazen Khasawneh, head of the ministry's department in charge of protecting farmlands.

Mr. Khasawneh told the Jordan Times that a plan of action was approved by the ministry Sunday to deal with the potential problem in coordination with the Armed Forces and police.

He said plans include aerial and ground spraying of possible locust targets.

"Saudi Arabia has always been successful in preventing locust invasions on their lands and before they (the locusts) reach our borders," Mr. Khasawneh said adding that Saudi Arabia has excellent capabilities and experience in combating the in-

sect, but Jordan must stay on alert at all times.

He said the plan of action includes dividing the Kingdom into two sections. One, he said, will cover 81 per cent of the Kingdom and stretch from the south-eastern desert bordering Saudi Arabia. The other 19 per cent will cover the rest of Jordan, he said.

"We have combating teams and equipment ready to be sent to the areas we believe could be hit by the locusts," Mr. Khasawneh said adding that the ministry has purchased extra supplies of pesticides in case the available supply fell short.

Also, Mr. Khasawneh said, a central operation room was formed at the

ministry to receive and relay information within the Kingdom and neighbouring states as well.

The locust, a migratory insect of the short-borne grasshopper family, consumes between two to three grammes daily of green food. Each female locust lays up to 400 eggs in three breeding seasons, which usually begins with the sporadic rains in the desert.

Under certain environmental conditions, which also lead to population increases, young locusts develop into a short-winged migratory form, gather in huge swarms, and at maturity take to the air. The swarms can include more than 100 billion insects. When they finally settle,

the resulting agricultural devastation is enormous. Migrating locusts appear like a cloud that stretches from the ground up to 200 metres high, moving about 500 kilometres a day.

Jordan last witnessed isolated swarms of locusts in the southeastern desert close to the border with Saudi Arabia in 1989. The Kingdom had since acquired essential equipment to combat the vegetation-destroying insect.

During the same period last year, measures were also taken in the Kingdom to stem a possible locust invasion which started south of Jeddah and extended south to Jazan along the coast of the Red Sea.

'Al Hilal Hospital phase I expansion completed'

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordanian National Red Crescent Society (JNRCS) Sunday announced that it has completed the first stage of an expansion project at Al Hilal Hospital in the Ashrafiyah district of Amman and plans to announce the start of the second phase after Eid Al Fitr next week.

Society President Mohammad Hadid said that thanks to donations totalling about \$2 million from several Red Cross societies, the JNRCS has added 2,000 square metres to the original 1,500-square-metre space.

The first expansion stage

entailed building a third storey on top of the existing hospital and the construction of a new X-ray unit, an ultrasound unit, an outpatient department, an emergency section and other utilities, complete with medical and other equipment. Dr. Hadid told the Jordan Times.

He said that the third storey now houses three main operation theatres, a secondary room for quick surgeries, an intensive care unit with six beds, and 14 private patient rooms, two wards and dormitories for resident doctors.

Dr. Hadid said the Luxem-

bourg Red Cross initiated the donations for the initial stage of the annex, and its gesture was later copied by the Japanese, German, American and Netherlands Red Cross Societies which contracted and financed the first stage of the building and the equipment.

According to Dr. Hadid, the JNRCS plans to implement the second stage which is expected to cost JD500,000 which has been provided for in a donation last year from a Jordanian benefactor, Kaw-kab Mango.

He said the second stage entails considerable expansion

of the obstetrics and gynaecology section, and the maternity and ward which will house five incubators instead of two.

In addition, Dr. Hadid said, the second phase entails making room for 150 beds instead of 63 at present and will include a blood bank, dormitories for women nurses, an administration section and a canteen.

Anwar Haddadin, the technical director of Al Hilal Hospital said many of the hospital's patients are needy people, and they are exempted from paying for their medical treatment. The hos-

pital usually charges the lowest rates as fixed by the health ministry and the Jordanian Medical Association.

Dr. Hadid said the second stage of the expansion project does not cover the hospital alone, but also in JNRCS headquarters and the vocational training centre where at least 400, up from 100, women trainees will be enrolled to typing, dress-making and embroidery courses free of charge.

He said the society expects the second phase to be completed in six months.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Schools to close Wednesday through Sunday

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Education Sunday announced that schools will close from Wednesday to Sunday on the occasion of Eid Al Fitr. Government departments and public institutions will remain closed from Thursday to Sunday to mark the feast, according to an earlier government statement.

Interior minister meets political party members

AMMAN (Petra) — Interior Minister Salameh Hamad Sunday said government does not interfere in the internal affairs of Jordanian political parties. Speaking at a meeting in his office with members of the temporary leadership of the Progressive Arab Baath Party, Mr. Hamad said the government refrains from any interference in parties' affairs to ensure the success of the democratic process. The party members called to brief him on a dispute between the party members and the party's central committee. Mr. Hamad said the ministry would, however, look into the party members' complaint that the central committee's actions were illegal.

Slight temperature rise predicted

AMMAN (Petra) — The Weather Bureau Sunday forecast a slight rise in temperatures and a further rise on Tuesday. A statement said that temperatures will be relatively cold at night and forecast fog formation in the early hours of Monday and Tuesday.

Audit Bureau saves JD6.4m in '94

AMMAN (Petra) — The Audit Bureau Sunday announced that its monitoring and control operations saved the government JD6,400,890 in 1994. The bureau said it was taking steps to tighten control on public spending in conformity with the government's policy statement.

AL al Bayt, Paris universities discuss links

AMMAN (J.T.) — AL al Bayt University President Mohammad Adnan Al Bakhit Sunday received Professor Francis Lamande, chairman of the University of Paris Islam and the West Department. Dr. Bakhit briefed Dr. Lamande on the university's objectives aiming to promote interfaith dialogue and drawing closer the followers of Islamic sects. The two discussed scopes of cooperation between AL al Bayt and Paris universities in scientific and academic fields and the prospect of exchanging information and teaching staff.

DEF finances 68 projects in Jan.

AMMAN (Petra) — The Development and Employment Fund (DEF) said Sunday that last month it financed 68 projects undertaken by private individuals by providing JD560,000 in loans. It said that most of the loans were used to finance services projects.

JBA, British trade group to agree on cooperation

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordanian Businessmen's Association (JBA) and the British Middle East Trade Association will sign a memorandum of commercial cooperation on March 14 when a large British trade delegation is expected to arrive here on a several-day visit to Jordan. The delegation will be accompanying the British Minister of Trade who will arrive here on Tuesday March 14, as part of the official delegation accompanying British Prime Minister John Major, who is scheduled for a two-day official visit to the Kingdom, according to a press release issued by the British embassy.

Mass graves in Grozny

(Continued from page 12)

ers loyal to Chechen rebel leader Dzhokhar Dudayev.

Although Urus-Martan has kept largely neutral, Chechen refugees said they did not believe the Russian assurances.

It was hard to see how Russian forces will be able to tell friend from foe in the patchwork of divided loyalties across southern Chechnya.

Armed irregulars on both

Delays, losses in mail delivery from U.S. not ministry responsibility, says official

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Post and Communications Sunday said that it was not responsible for the delay or loss of mail or other postal materials sent from the United States and blamed such inconveniences on the U.S. postal system. Ministry Secretary General Hashem Qudah said his office recently received complaints from citizens that mail and packages sent to them from the U.S. were either received after significant delay or lost altogether.

Although such delays or losses were not the responsibility of the Jordanian authorities, the ministry's post administration section has

contacted the U.S. postal services informing them of the situation, said Mr. Qudah.

The official added that delays and losses of mail, and other postal materials usually are the result of incorrect addressing, despatch through a third party route rather than directly from the United States to Jordan or because the material is sent by surface mail.

According to Mr. Qudah, the Jordanian postal administration does not delay any incoming mail, but promptly distributes it to the addressee.

Mr. Qudah's statement, as reported by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, came one day

after Al Ra'i Arabic daily published an open letter to Minister of Post and Communications Jamal Saraiheh complaining about an endless delay in the arrival of a posted item from Salt to Amman.

Ahmad Ghneimat of Salt complained in his letter to the minister that on Feb. 2, 1995 he sent a package to Amman by ordinary mail. He said the package contained photos, some jewellery, a bottle of perfume and other personal items. But he said that to date the package had not arrived. Mr. Ghneimat urged the minister to help him retrieve the package or ensure its safe arrival to its destination.

Panel rules JPA has right to collect 1% of newspaper advertising revenues

AMMAN (J.T.) — A judicial panel chaired by Judge Khleif Suheimat has ruled that the Jordan Press Association (JPA) has the right to collect one per cent of the total advertising revenues earned by the daily newspapers published in the Kingdom whether the advertisements are placed by government agencies or private institutions and individuals.

The panel said in a statement Sunday that it convened at the request of the prime minister who had asked that the panel examine then issue its ruling in clarification of Article I of the 1983 JPA law and JPA Statute 35 of 1983.

The panel was asked to

rule on whether the JPA was entitled to one per cent of the earnings on all advertisements. The ruling confirmed that right and said that in any case the amount should not be less than JD2000 annually from each daily newspaper.

The panel also ruled that each weekly publication should pay the JPA JD75 annually.

Mr. Suleiman Qudah told the Jordan Times Sunday that the association would wait for a reaction from the newspapers' managements and would take no action at present in order to observe that the law is being enforced.

"We have been demanding

that they abide by the law and the JPA statute of 1983 for more than 20 years," said Mr. Qudah, who added that in light of the interpretation of the law, there should be no more delays in its implementation.

The panel's ruling, he added, has now put an end to a dispute between the JPA and the newspaper managements over the interpretation of the law, and "we now hope that they would respond favourably."

Mr. Qudah said that the additional income would certainly contribute towards improving the association's financial status and achieve the journalist's aspirations.

S. Arabia, Yemen sign accord

(Continued from page 1)

5. A joint top-level military committee will be created to guarantee that no military activity takes place along the joint border.

6. The two countries will set up a joint ministerial committee charged with promoting economic, trade and cultural bilateral relations.

7. A joint high committee will supervise and facilitate the duties of the other working groups.

8. The two countries state their commitment not to tolerate on their respective territories any military or political activities hostile to the other or to serve as a base from which to launch aggressive actions.

9. To ensure an adequate and cordial atmosphere to allow the negotiations to continue, each side commits itself to avoiding any propaganda hostile to the other.

10. The declaration of principles does not contain any clause modifying the Taif treaty and its appendices.

11. The verbal proceeding must be co-signed by the leaders of the two countries.

frontier, leaving around 1,600 kilometres, poorly defined.

That part had been roughly marked by the British before they withdrew from Aden, in what became South Yemen, in November 1967. The Saudis had never formally acknowledged that line.

Much of this part of the border runs through the southern edge of the Rubh Al Khali, or the empty quarter, a vast desert wilderness.

This had little real importance until the mid-1980s, when Yemen discovered oil in areas near the notional boundary line.

The Taif treaty lapsed last year, leaving the two neighbours without a legally defined border. But even before that, the treaty had covered only a small part of the northwestern sector of the

Abdul Meguid arrives

(Continued from page 1)

of the Arab League Council would also discuss a possible collective Arab stand on Egypt's dispute with Israel over the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Egypt says that it would not renew its commitment to the treaty when it comes up for review in April unless

Israel enters the agreement, Israel, arguing that it has "special security concerns," has ruled out entering the treaty.

Reports from Cairo said this week that some progress was made in bridging the Egyptian-Israeli differences over the NPT.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

FILM

★ Film entitled "Ascenseur Pour L'Echafaud" at the French Cultural Centre at 7:00 p.m.

PLAYS

★ Play (in Arabic) entitled "You Are Not Yourself" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 9:00 p.m.

★ Play (in Arabic) entitled "The Mask" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

YOUTH FESTIVAL

★ Youth festival (with the participation of

artist association Kuyunjan) at the Royal Cultural Centre at 9:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

★ Display of Bani Hamida new designs of rugs at the Bani Hamida House, Jabal Amman (Tel. 658696).

★ Exhibition of oil paintings by Sahab Ibrahim at Al Bayraq Art Gallery, Sports City intersection (Tel. 688701).

★ Exhibition of handicrafts by Hasmig Kuyunjan at the Royal Cultural Centre.

★ Photo exhibition at the Friends of Archaeology Centre.

★ "Young America" exhibit (with photographs featuring Americans of all ages) at the American Centre.

★ Exhibition of works by Qasim Al Samir at the Housing Bank Complex Gallery.

★ Book exhibition at the Royal Cultural Centre.

Balladur is on slippery slope

PARIS (Agencies) — France's conservative Prime Minister Edouard Balladur, once the miles-ahead favourite to win presidential elections next spring, on Sunday appeared on a slippery slope to possible defeat as scandals combined with poor poll ratings to damage his campaign.

With the first round of the elections less than two months away on April 23, Mr. Balladur no longer dominates the opinion polls, with rival Gaullist candidate Jacques Chirac and Socialist Lionel Jospin hot on his heels.

One poll by the IPSOS institute credited the three with absolutely equal scores in the first round, prompting the right-wing weekly *Le Point* to comment that Balladur was on "a slippery slope."

At the same time Interior Minister Charles Pasqua, once a trump card in the Balladur campaign, turned into a liability after provoking two scarcely credible scandals that dragged down the prime minister.

Mr. Pasqua was widely blamed for an embarrassing wire-tapping scandal and a row over leaked allegations of U.S. spying in France that followed hard on his heels last week, raising doubts he will be able to realise his ambition of becoming prime minister should Mr. Balladur win the

race to replace Socialist President Francois Mitterrand.

The espionage affair was interpreted both in France and in the United States as a blatant attempt to divert attention from the phone-tapping case that involved illegal financing of the country's biggest party, Mr. Pasqua's own neo-Gaullist Rally for the Republic (RPR), and in his own backyard, his Hauts-de-Seine power base, west of Paris.

But the two affairs prompted a run on the French franc which last Friday sank to its lowest level since October 1993, breaking briefly through the 3.52-franc level against the German mark, dangerously close to its all-time low of 3.5490 to the mark in August 1993.

The wiretap case showed that the Balladur campaign is at the mercy of the repercussions of corruption scandals gripping the country in which three of his ministers have already had to resign.

The prime minister must now decide whether to ask for Mr. Pasqua's head, but analysts said another resignation would be one too many and would also lose Balladur the support commanded by Mr. Pasqua within the RPR.

Pollsters said Sunday that the wiretap case remained the main cause of Mr. Balladur's decline in popularity.

Philippe Mechet, director-general of the Louis Harris

Institute, said the bugging case was the "first factor in the decline" of the prime minister, coupled with his climbdown earlier this month in face of student demonstrations.

No polls have yet measured the effects of the espionage case, which caused an open row in the government between Mr. Pasqua and Foreign Minister Alain Juppé, and drew accusations of lying against the interior minister from the U.S. embassy here.

The phone-tap row broke out early in February after the Paris court of appeal threw out police phone-tapping evidence against psychiatrist and sexologist Jean-Pierre Marchal, in a "dirty trick" case aimed at compromising his son-in-law, examining magistrate Eric Halphen, and removing him from the investigation into illegal financing of the RPR.

Jean-Marc Lech, of IPSOS, said 62-year-old Chirac's image had changed with the mayor of Paris appearing "dynamic," "nice" and "courageous" whereas Mr. Balladur, 65, came over as "tolerant" and "reassuring."

Pierre Giacommetti, of BVA, said Mr. Balladur no longer appeared capable of transcending political divisions and rallying the various political families of the right and the centre.

All the pollsters said Mr. Jospin was profiting from the confusion on the right and his reputation for personal integrity and simplicity, exemplified by his election slogan "With Jospin, it's clear."

But they said the situation could easily be transformed, with all the polls showing that around 50 per cent of electors have not yet made up their mind.

Meanwhile the Socialists can't even count on President Francois Mitterrand rallying his own family behind the party's presidential candidate.

His high-profile nephew is backing conservative Jacques Chirac.

"Solidarity isn't a factor any more," television host Frederic Mitterrand said in an interview published Saturday in *Le Parisien*. "Francois Mitterrand is arriving at the end of his second term. I have my freedom to manoeuvre again."

At the moment, I think the candidate I prefer is Jacques Chirac. For lots of precise reasons, namely because he helped me with important cultural initiatives," he said.

Frederic Mitterrand, long considered a leftist intellectual, has hosted talk shows and other programmes and directed a film.

President Mitterrand, known to favour party chief Henri Emmanuelli, has yet to give candidate Lionel Jospin his backing.



From left to right, French actress Jeanne Moreau (honorary Cesar), French actor Alain Delon, holding the trophy Isabelle Adjani (who was not present) won for best actress, British movie director Mike Newell, the Cesar for best foreign movie *Four Weddings And A Funeral*, U.S. movie director Steven Spielberg (honorary Cesar) and U.S. star Gregory Peck (honorary Cesar) pose for photographers during the 20th Cesar Awards ceremony at the Palais Des Congres (AFP photo)

French film academy gives Cesar to Les Roseaux Sauvages

PARIS (AP) — Les Roseaux Sauvages (Wild Reeds) won best French film and Britain's *Four Weddings And A Funeral* took Best Foreign Film at France's 20th annual Cesar Awards. Les Roseaux Sauvages, the story of adolescent life during Algeria's war for independence from France in the early 1960s, won a total of four Cesars, including best director for Andre Techine.

The film also won for best screenplay and best young actress. *Four Weddings*, directed by Mike Newell, was France's biggest box office draw last year. American nominees were Schindler's List and Pulp Fiction and Short Cuts.

The film that took the most awards — five — was *La Reine Margot*, a story of Catholic persecution of Protestants in France during the 16th century, directed by Patrice Chereau.

Isabelle Adjani won Best Actress for her role in the film, taking for honour for an unprecedented fourth time. The film also won best sup-

porting actor and actress, photography and costume. It is nominated for an Oscar for costume.

Best actor went to Gerard Lanvin in *Le Fil Prefere* (Favourite Son).

The big disappointment of the evening was Leon (The Professional), Luc Besson's action-packed story of a New York hit man. Nominated for seven awards, it took none.

Honorary Cesars went to director Steven Spielberg, actor Gregory Peck and actress Jeanne Moreau.

In opening the ceremony hosted by actor Alain Delon, producer Daniel Toscani Plantier, president of the Academy of Cinema Arts, noted that the awards came on the 100th birthday of cinema.

The first screening for a paying audience on Dec. 28, 1895, in the basement of a Paris cafe, drew an audience of only 33 people.

"But from crisis to crisis, cinema survives and wins," he said, addressing Culture Minister Jacques Toubon in the audience.

Despite subsidies, French film's share of its home market is estimated to have fallen below 30 per cent last year for the first time in decades, losing ground to Hollywood.

"In a country that reverses film and is fighting for its cultural identity, I would like to say I will fight right along with you," Mr. Spielberg told the audience.

Actor Gregory Peck received the Cesar for his 50 years in cinema, and he reminisced about a time he spoke with Gary Cooper.

"He asked me how many films I'd made and I said two. He asked how were they? I said one good, one bad," Mr. Peck, 78, told the audience. "Well I'm a little more ambitious now, but when I look back, I see that Gary Cooper wasn't far wrong," he said modestly. "The thing is you have to keep at it. Two out of five in 50 years and you're doing all right."

"I thank you members of the Cesar Academy and I'm extremely honoured," said the star of *Days Of Glory* and *Moby Dick*.

Colombia faces possible drug blacklisting

BOGOTA (R) — Speculation about possible links between President Ernesto Samper's government and drug traffickers has forced Colombia on the defensive days before a crucial decision in Washington on future anti-drug aid.

Under an annual procedure, President Bill Clinton must by March 1 tell Congress whether he believes Colombia, which has seen dozens of journalists, judges, politicians and police killed in the war on drug cartels, is doing all it can to crush traffickers and cut the supply of narcotics to U.S. streets.

Colombia has for the last eight years won full "certification" as the recommendation is known, but this year things are less certain.

"The bottom line is that the Americans just don't trust Samper," one senior government official said on condition of anonymity. "The main reason why (he is not trusted) is the narco-cassettes."

Mr. Samper's election victory last June was overshadowed when his defeated rival, Andres Pastrana, produced what everyone here calls the "narco-cassettes" — a series of taped phone conversations in which leaders of the Cali cocaine cartel were heard to discuss a \$3.6 million donation to Mr. Samper's campaign.

Mr. Samper said the cartel kingpins, who control around 80 per cent of the world's cocaine supply, had offered money for his campaign but he insisted it was rejected. An internal party audit supported him and the prosecutor-general at the time, Gustavo De Greiff, found no evidence of wrongdoing.

Mr. Samper's chief spokesman, Juan Fernando Cristo, dismisses the latest drug rumours as the work of malicious anti-government elements and says Washington has no reason not to trust the president fully.

"All there is, is a series of weak arguments and episodes which are being used to try to justify such a decision," he said, referring to a possible decertification.

Mr. Samper himself, eager to show commitment in the war on drugs, pledged Feb. 7 to wipe out every single coca bush, marijuana plant and opium poppy in the country in the next two years to choke off drug supply — the government's most ambitious eradication programme ever.

But despite his administration's denials and its pledges to go on fighting the drug cartels the shadow of the "narco-cassettes" continues to haunt Mr. Samper.

U.S. Ambassador to Colombia Myles Frechette said in a speech in New York last month that it would be "difficult" for Colombia to win certification given the atmosphere in Washington.



Japanese Crown Prince Naruhito (left-middle) and Crown Princess Masako (right-middle) chat with an earthquake survivor inside a school gymnasium where about 900 local residents are taking shelter after losing their homes, in Kobe (AFP photo)

Naruhito, Masako visit quake victims in Kobe

KOBE, Japan (AP) — Japan's Crown Prince Naruhito and Princess Masako laid flowers on altars for the dead and consoled homeless people Sunday in a visit to earthquake-devastated areas of western Japan.

Prince Naruhito, eldest son of Emperor Akihito and heir to the throne, and his wife joined 5,900 bereaved relatives and other citizens in praying for earthquake victims in memorial services in the Kobe suburbs of Nishinomiya and Ashiya.

They laid white carnations on the altars at both, but made no speeches.

Of 5,438 people killed by the 7.2 magnitude quake on

Jan. 17, 995 people died in Nishinomiya and 378 in Ashiya, the National Police Agency said.

Earlier Sunday, the royal couple visited a construction site and elementary school that shelters 860 left homeless by the quake.

"Please take care of your health," the prince told one woman at the school. Several victims in the school gymnasium cried after talking with Prince Naruhito.

As of Sunday, officials said 188,000 homeless people were staying at 911 shelters in schools and public facilities. They said 415,100 households had no gas supplies and 92,700 had no running water.

Simpson lawyers coach key witness on testimony

LOS ANGELES (R) — O.J. Simpson's defence lawyers were spending Sunday coaching one of their star witnesses whose testimony could prove to be a minefield of contradictions and inconsistencies.

Rosa Lopez, whose reluctance to testify has already given the lawyers giant headaches, was due to take the witness stand Monday to provide an alibi for the American sports legend in his double murder trial.

But Ms. Lopez, who has already been branded a liar by deputy district attorney Christopher Darden, is sure to be attacked at length by prosecutors who are seeking to discredit her testimony and turn it to their advantage.

Legal analysts said that the defence is "rolling the dice" by putting Ms. Lopez on the stand.

Simpson is a member of American Professional Football's Hall of Fame. He became a household name following his retirement as a sportscaster, actor and TV pitchman and has pleaded

not guilty in the murders of his ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend Ronald Goldman.

The two were stabbed and slashed to death outside Nicole Simpson's luxury townhouse in the fashionable Brentwood section of Los Angeles on June 12, 1994.

Prosecutors claim Simpson drove there in his white Ford Bronco with his estate two miles away, committed the murders and then drove back.

The two were murdered, according to the prosecution scenario, at about 10:15 (local time).

But Ms. Lopez, a live-in housekeeper at the home near door to Simpson's, was due to testify that she saw the Bronco parked outside the football Hall of Famer's estate at between 10:15 p.m. and 10:20 p.m. that night.

Ms. Lopez contradicted herself several times during a hearing Friday to determine if her testimony should be taken immediately because she was unlikely to return to Los Angeles.

Kim Jong-Il pays last respects to defence minister

SEOUL (AFP) — North Korea's reclusive leader Kim Jong-Il has made a rare appearance to pay his last respects to his staunch backer and protector, Marshall O Jin-U, official reports said Sunday.

Mr. Kim visited a government building where the body of the 78-year-old defence minister has been lying in state since his death Saturday from cancer, the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said.

"Comrade Kim Jong-Il observed a moment's silence in memory of the deceased and made a round of the bier in bitter grief at the loss of his close revolutionary comrade-in-arms," the KCNA said.

Mr. Kim, 53, was accompanied by military leaders, including chief of staff Vice Marshall Choe Kwang, 77, the man most likely to take over as head of the military.

Mr. Kim heads a 240-strong state funeral committee for Marshall O, who died in a Pyongyang hospital early Saturday, the report said.

The demise of Marshall O, who went to Paris for cancer treatment last year, came as the Stalinist state was still reeling from the death of state founder Kim Il-Sung last July.

As the leader of the "old guard," Marshall O had fierce, protected Kim Jong-Il's succession to power, soliciting loyalty from the North's 1.1 million-strong armed forces.

Marshall O's death leaves Kim Jong-Il as the only surviving member of the three-man political bureau presidium, a top decision-making body of the North's ruling Workers' Party, commentators said.

BEIJING (AFP) — Beijing issued a scathing rebuttal Sunday of the U.S. State Department's recent report on human rights abuses in China, labelling the document a mishmash of "hearsay and fabrication."

The highly critical U.S. report, published Feb. 1, "distorts facts and confuses right and wrong," the State Council's Information Office said in a lengthy commentary carried by the official Xinhua News Agency.

The publication of the commentary came as Chinese and U.S. negotiators entered a last ditch round of talks Sunday morning aimed at averting a multi-billion dollar trade war.

The commentary specifically refuted allegations made in the report regarding crackdowns on non-violent political dissidents, mistreatment of prisoners and a government-sanctioned trade in the use of organs from executed prisoners for surgical transplants.

The cases listed in the annual State Department re-

Thais offers to mediate Burma conflict

BANGKOK (AFP) — Thailand has offered to mediate peace talks between Burma's ethnic Karen rebels and Rangoon to end a conflict that began a half-century ago.

Thai Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai said late Saturday that his former foreign minister, Thaksin Shinawatra, had made the offer during a visit to the Burmese capital in mid-January.

"We have tried to give both sides the opportunity to talk," Mr. Chuan said, adding that negotiations could help them "avoid killing each other and lessen the severity of their clashes."

Karen Nation Union (KNU) officials have indicated that they would enter peace talks with the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), the official name of the junta in Rangoon, at the invitation of a third party.

That third party was not expected to be Thailand. As recently as this month, senior Thai government and military officials had said they would remain outside the "internal affairs" of their neighbour, a stance that echoed Bangkok's economic policy of "constructive engagement" with the junta.

But Mr. Chuan broke clearly from that posture Saturday, following several incidents in which Karen's 47-year-old war for autonomy spilled into his country.

SLORC troops last month stormed the KNU's headquarters on the Moai River, sending some 10,000 Karen fleeing across the natural border into Thailand.

Since then, Rangoon soldiers and Karen defectors have crossed the river several times, apparently to kidnap KNU officials and lure refugees away from the KNU leadership and back to Burma.

Tajiks vote in take it or leave it poll

DUSHANBE (AFP) — Tajikistan went to the polls Sunday faced with a stark choice of voting for a supporter of neo-Communist President Emomali Rakhmonov or staying at home.

Polling booths opened at six a.m. (0100 GMT) and closed at eight p.m., but first results were not expected to be known until Tuesday.

Electoral Commission officials put overall participation at 48 per cent by midday but Foreign Ministry officials said a mere 18 per cent of voters had turned out in the capital Dushanbe.

"I thought the elections were tomorrow," said a soldier driving one of the few cars out on the capital's snowy streets. "Only 50 people have

turned up to vote this morning," said the director of one polling booth where 2,000 people were to have cast their ballots.

paradoxically, the highest participation rates were in regions controlled by the banned opposition.

In the Garm Valley, some 150 kilometres (95 miles) from Dushanbe and controlled by the armed Islamic opposition, turnout was already at 89 per cent by midday.

In the mountainous region of Pamir in the autonomous region of Gorno-Badakhshan covering about half the country's surface area, the Foreign Ministry put participation at 63 per cent by midday, though it was impossible to verify the figures indepen-

dently.

The region is usually seen as an opposition stronghold.

There were earlier fears the banned Islamic opposition would try to disrupt polling, after a rocket attack here Thursday on a bus carrying doctors and nurses of Russian Border-Guards killed one person and wounded six.

Sunday's poll took place in the absence of international observers, who refused to monitor the proceedings, citing a basic lack of democracy and the absence of virtually any opposition candidates in the Central Asian nation.

"There is not a basic level of democracy," said Gancho Ganchev, head of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe mission in Dushanbe.

African Film Festival opens

OUAGADOUGOU (R) — A pan-African Film Festival celebrating a centenary of cinema opened in Burkina Faso, overshadowed by the presence of South Africa's defiant Winnie Mandela.

The estranged wife of South African President Nelson Mandela had flown to Ouagadougou in defiance of the president's orders. South African films are competing for the first time at the 14th Pan-African Film Festival, whose theme Cinema And History marks 100 years since the Lumiere brothers held the first film screening in Paris.

A smiling Mrs. Mandela, who is South Africa's deputy minister of arts, culture, science and technology, declined to comment on her presence to reporters. She was the guest of honour in Ouagadougou's Aug. 4 Stadium, where a crowd of around 25,000 heard music by artists from Burkina Faso and South African groups Super Queens, Malatini and the Maotela Queens and watched a sound and light show recalling the history of cinema.

Twenty-six feature films, six by filmmakers from outside the continent, and 31 shorts and documentaries have been entered for the Pan-African Festival of Cinema and Television of Ouagadougou (FESPACO). South Africa's entries are a feature film, *Confessions Of A Yeoville Rapist*, directed by Ian Ker-khof and a short film, *Mickey Madoda Dube's Imbazo*.

Confessions Of A Yeoville Rapist is the story of a South African returning to his country to make a film about last year's first all-race elections.

The festival will also include retrospectives of South African film and films made in Africa in the colonial era.

Burkina Faso's prime minister, Roch Marc Christian Kaboré, said in an opening address that African filmmakers were gaining more international renown despite their often limited means.

Artificial insemination without sperm

ATHENS (AFP) — Two Greek women have become pregnant after being artificially inseminated by a new technique, developed by Greek and Japanese researchers, that does not use sperm, Greek newspapers reported Saturday. Greek gynecologist Nikos Soffikis, who devised the method with a team of specialists working at Tottori University in western Japan, said he removed cells from the testicles of infertile men and, after a special preparation in the laboratory, injected them into the women. Out of 80 couples of various nationalities who asked Dr. Soffikis, 34, to help them have children, 46 women became pregnant, but only four managed to keep the embryo for more than two weeks. Two of those women later had miscarriages, the doctor said, adding that the technique "is still in its infancy." He said the first birth was due in May.

60 couples tie the knot in mass ceremony

TAIPEI (AFP) — Sixty couples, including a Japanese bridegroom, were married Sunday in Taiwan's first-ever mass ceremony conducted according to a centuries-old custom. Brides and grooms, clad in bright red costumes as in ancient times, exchanged vows at the Confucius Temple, with Vice Mayor Pai Hsin-Hsiung officiating. The wedding was conducted according to a centuries-old Chinese custom, with the grooms leading the way astride horses and the brides riding behind in palanquins, or wooden sedan chairs. The city government gave each couple a wedding certificate and an electric blanket drier as a wedding gift.

Composer's house damaged by fire

NEW YORK (AFP) — The home of Broadway composer Stephen Sondheim was seriously damaged by fire, killing a dog believed to belong to Sondheim. Fire Department spokesman Robert Broderick said that no one was home when the fire broke out Friday evening. The dog died of smoke inhalation. The blaze damaged two of the home's five floors but was not considered suspicious.



Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori speaks with a soldier wounded in the border conflict with Ecuador during a visit to Tiwinza in the conflict zone. Mr. Fujimori accused

Ecuador of launching attacks to try to retake an area in the month-old border dispute as Peru dispatched more troops to the region (AFP photo)

Fujimori charges Ecuador of launching attacks

UTCUBAMBA, Peru (AFP) — President Alberto Fujimori accused Ecuador Saturday of launching "criminal" attacks to retake an area in a month-old border dispute as Peru dispatched more troops to the region.

With a week-old ceasefire shaken by sporadic fighting, Mr. Fujimori denounced what he claimed was an Ecuadorian attempt to recover the disputed village of Tiwinza in the Condor Mountains.

Mr. Fujimori, visiting troops in the El Miligrao outpost, said Ecuador had begun Friday "fierce bombing, I would call it criminal, with the aim of recovering

Tiwinza." "I felt it, I lived these attacks, but I have also seen our troops defend our positions," said the Peruvian leader, who according to witnesses narrowly missed a mortar attack earlier this week.

Ecuador's Information Minister Enrique Proano meanwhile announced in Quito that military and diplomatic observers from Argentina, Chile, Brazil and the United States planned to travel to the war-torn region Sunday or Monday.

The monitors were to report on compliance with a Feb. 17 ceasefire agreement

that was to end the fighting between Ecuador and Peru over the unmarked stretch of border.

Argentina, Chile, Brazil and the United States are the guarantors of the 1942 Rio Protocol that set the borders between the two countries.

Peruvian military sources indicated meanwhile that 500 troops had been shifted from a base in Junin where they had been fighting leftist rebels to the El Miligrao base near the Condor Mountains.

"All the bases and guard posts as well as supply depots in the conflict zone are, as of this morning, super stocked with artillery to repel a possible Ecuadorian air attack," a

Peruvian military spokesman said.

"The Guarantor countries consider that their immediate presence in the area would contribute to the complete implementation of the Itamaraty Peace Agreement," they said in a statement, referring to the ceasefire signed earlier this month in Brazil.

The commander of Ecuador's Condor 21 Brigade, Colonel Jose Grijalba, said there had been lull in the fighting over the past two days and suggested Peru was mounting another offensive.

In Brasilia earlier, the four Rio guarantors called on the two Andean nations "to avoid any initiative that could be interpreted as a threat or provocation."

Ecuadorian military officials reported late Saturday a cessation of hostilities along the border.

In Quito, Ecuador said that the Vatican had agreed to its request for Pope John Paul II to send a personal representative to intervene.

Among the exchanges reported were three mortar rounds fired by Ecuadorian troops near a Peruvian post, including one that landed within 100 metres of Mr. Fujimori, a journalist at the scene said Friday.

Mr. Fujimori was unhurt and was hustled out of the zone. He had been inspecting the border post at Cueva De Los Tayos located in the jungle on a 78-kilometre stretch of unmarked border of the Andes Condor range.



Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori drinks the conflict zone on the border with Ecuador water as a soldier collects more water (left) (AFP photo) from a stream during Mr. Fujimori's visit to

Chechens shun Moscow revenge attacks so far

MOSCOW (R) — Chechen secessionist rebels have so far failed to strike back at Moscow as they threatened, says a police chief in Russia's heavily-guarded capital.

Not a single vengeful Chechen guerrilla has been caught trying to blow up strategic sites in Moscow since Kremlin troops launched a military campaign in the separatist region in December, according to crime fighters here.

"No so-called terrorists, people who have come specifically to Moscow to blow something up, have been detained here," said Mikhail Suntsev, deputy head of the Ethnic Crimes Unit of the Regional Directorate for the Fight With Organised Crime (RUOP).

"But we can't guarantee this is completely impossible. So we have geared up to prevent these things from happening," he said in a weekend interview.

Armoured cars stand at exits from Moscow's main ring road. Police accompanied by soldiers search trains, metro stations, and airports, detaining Chechens for questioning. Mr. Suntsev did not know how much the security

operation had cost so far. President Boris Yeltsin sought to justify his army's brutal military intervention in Chechnya by repeatedly accusing the rebel region's leader of generating crime and destabilising the whole of southern Russia.

Chechen President Dzhokhar Dudayev, still directing separatist fighters now falling back from Russian-held Grozny, has fuelled fears of Chechen revenge with threats he would spread the war to Moscow by organising terrorist attacks there.

The Chechen mafia, one of several southern ethnic mafias which moved to Moscow as Western-style economic activity was permitted for the first time in the Soviet Union in the late 1980s, has a legendary and fearsome reputation.

But Mr. Suntsev said it was not, in fact, the terrifying and bloodthirsty criminal army most Russians believe it to be.

It comes way down in the pecking order of crime, below Russian mafia groups, the powerful Georgian mafia and the fruit-and-vegetable trad-

ers of Azerbaijan, he told Reuters.

The Chechen mafia's reputation stemmed from the early days when it moved into Moscow, he said, and was still fighting fiercely for territory.

Since then, it had agreed on its sphere of influence — protection rackets and extortion — with other crime groups.

"Basically now Chechens have made their contacts with Russian groups. There isn't much confrontation because they know they're not living here just for a month or two. They've found common ground and divided the crime business among themselves."

"Chechen criminal activity has dropped sharply."

Mr. Suntsev said there had been 30,000 Chechens living in Moscow at the start of the war. The figure had probably swelled to about 50,000 by February, as refugees escaped the fighting in their homeland and gravitated towards Moscow.

About 2,000 of them belonged to criminal groups at one of the four levels Chechen crime groups operate on, he added, from small-

scale theft by young students or workers through organised crime "fighters" and bosses, to political opponents of Mr. Dudayev.

"It was in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when they started operating here and were pretty active, that people here started to be scared of them. So the word Chechen has acquired a negative connotation, although they aren't so active any more."

Mr. Suntsev said envoys of Mr. Dudayev had visited Moscow to try to stir up the Chechen diaspora into committing extremist acts. But the leaders of the diaspora, mostly from the opposition to Mr. Dudayev, had ordered other Chechens to behave.

"It was the criminal part of the diaspora which spoke out most strongly against any extremist activity. This is because they're already settled here and they have their own sources of finance," he said. "Of course if they did commit some terrorist act the forces of law and order would catch up with them. They understand that full well, so they have opted not to try anything."

Kozyrev to assess future with China after Deng

MOSCOW (R) — Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev is likely to use his visit to Beijing this week to discreetly assess the future of Russia's relations with China as the health of its paramount leader Deng Xiaoping declines.

Official announcements of the visit, due to take place on March 1 and 2, said Mr. Kozyrev's chief aim was to maintain political contacts with Chinese leaders.

Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Panov has said neither this visit nor one to Japan immediately afterwards on March 2-4 will produce any sensations.

But Russian Television quoted unnamed Foreign Ministry officials as saying last week that Moscow was keen to know who is to succeed Mr. Deng, one of the

architects of the Russian-Chinese thaw which replaced decades of hostility and suspicion.

"Senior diplomats have stressed the importance of Russo-Chinese relations for Moscow and the need to find ways to preserve the current positive trends in them whatever changes may occur in China," a television commentator said.

Mr. Deng and the former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev reached a breakthrough in the 1980s, ending a fierce ideological stand-off and easing huge tensions in the region.

Post-Communist Russia has found in China a huge market for its industries, including arms producers, which have been hard hit by an economic slump at home.

"Officials in Smolenskaya Square (the Foreign Ministry) said the last thing Moscow needs is an irritant which might cast a shadow over relations between Russia and China at this sensitive moment," Russian Television said.

Mr. Kozyrev will first have to clarify his Chinese hosts Moscow's stance on recent demands by an influential Russian regional boss to reconsider a keynote border agreement signed in 1991.

Earlier this month Yevgeny Nazdratenko, governor of the maritime region bordering China, said the treaty, which surrenders to Beijing some 15 square kilometres of the territory now controlled by Moscow was unjust and should be revised.

China had long claimed back three tiny strips of land on the 4,300-kilometre eastern section of the border seized by the Soviet Union in the mid-1930s. The border treaty marked the disputed territory as Chinese and actual demarcation started in 1993.

Mr. Nazdratenko has said his administration will formally ask the Russian parliament to denounce the treaty, ratified in 1992.

Mr. Kozyrev later vowed the issue of denouncing the treaty will never be raised and that the border demarcation will go ahead according to the pact.

But some political parties inside and outside the parliament may try to use the treaty issue to stir up nationalist feeling.

Demirel's trip to Sarajevo is uncertain Curb on peacekeepers puts Bosnian army, U.N. at odds

SARAJEVO (R) — The Muslim-led government is taking a tougher stance towards the United Nations mission in Bosnia, restricting movements of peacekeepers in a bid to assert its authority, U.N. officers said Sunday.

"They are certainly much bolder than they were before," said U.N. spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Gary Coward. "They apparently wish to change their relationship with the U.N."

The government army has imposed restrictions on peacekeeping troops across the country, preventing U.N. patrols near frontlines in northeast Bosnia and insisting on inspections of U.N. vehicles.

Bosnian Muslims blocked British peacekeepers at their base in central Bosnia for a third day running Sunday in a row over the presence of Serb liaison officers who arrived there last month under the current ceasefire accord.

Bosnian army soldiers were also blocking a road outside Visokoi, where Canadian peacekeepers have been faced with increasing harassment from the Muslims.

Earlier this month, a Ukrainian U.N. colonel was detained for several hours in the eastern enclave of Gorazde, because a local commander wanted the U.N. to address his complaints.

The harassment has been accompanied by hostile

coverage of United Nations in the local media and calls by a government representative to renegotiate the financial terms of the U.N. mission in Bosnia, which at present only pays for utilities and not for its accommodation.

Until recently, it was always Bosnian Serb forces the United Nations blamed for harassing peacekeepers.

Blockading U.N. soldiers or media criticism would have been unheard of earlier in the war but the government now apparently believed it was time to show the U.N. who was in charge.

United Nations officials and Western diplomats say the government's growing confidence in its army and a wish to exert more authority over its own territory, especially outside Sarajevo.

With the four-month ceasefire set to expire on May 1, the Serbs and the Bosnian army have been using the truce to regroup and rearm for an expected resumption of fighting.

The Bosnian Serbs have never allowed peacekeepers to set up bases on their territory and U.N. officials said the Muslims were now reluctant to allow peacekeepers to get a look at their preparations.

"They watched the Bosnian Serb side flex their muscles to some extent and the U.N. is limited in how it can respond. So they may be

following a similar line," said Col. Coward.

A Western diplomat added: "They are asserting their sovereignty towards an international organisation, which is their right. But they have to be careful. They need the U.N. in Sarajevo."

The Bosnian government still relies on the U.N. mission to ferry in vital relief supplies, especially in Sarajevo, where a humanitarian air bridge has kept the city alive despite nearly three years of Serb siege.

"They have to walk a delicate line," the diplomat said. The real test of relations between the Muslim-led government and the U.N. could come in the spring, when fighting may resume in earnest after the ceasefire expires.

Meanwhile, Turkish President Suleyman Demirel will fly to the Croatian port city of Split Monday but it is not certain he will make a planned visit to Sarajevo, where a Turkish advance party came under fire.

"What happens after he gets to Split is not yet clear, this will be decided from Split," a spokeswoman told Reuters Sunday.

The U.N. mission in Sarajevo said Sunday it was expecting Mr. Demirel to go ahead with a visit to the besieged city, although Bosnian Serbs have yet to offer security guarantees, Col. Co-

ward said.

"The president is due to visit Monday and we're working under the assumption that he's going to come," Col. Coward said.

U.N. officials had informed Ankara of the security situation around Sarajevo but had made no request to cancel the visit.

The U.N. could not say who had fired at the advance party's aircraft Saturday by a planned trip but Mr. Demirel was sure to provoke opposition from Bosnian Serbs besieging Sarajevo.

They view Turkey, which ruled the region for centuries under the Ottoman Empire, as a traditional enemy. Ankara is a strong supporter of Bosnia's Muslim-led government.

The plane carrying a team of Turkish government officials preparing the visit came under small-arms fire after landing at Sarajevo Airport. There were no casualties and it appeared the aircraft sustained no serious damage.

One U.N. source said he thought the Serbs were "trying to send a message."

Mr. Demirel's planned trip is his second attempt in eight months to visit Sarajevo. He had to cancel a trip in July at the last moment because Bosnian Serb forces refused to guarantee safe passage.

Pope John Paul also had to cancel a visit in September because the Serbs refused to assure his safety.

Pakistan holds 36 for Karachi killings

KARACHI, Pakistan (R) — Pakistani police arrested 36 Islamic activists in a crackdown Sunday as the port city of Karachi mourned the death of 20 worshippers in attacks on mosques Saturday, police said.

Pakistan's largest city of more than 12 million, the capital of the southern province of Sind looked deserted after shops pulled down shutters as a mark of mourning, witnesses said.

"Police have arrested 36 activists of four religious parties," a police official said.

The crackdown followed Saturday's attack at two mosques of the minority Shi'ite Muslim sect in which 20 worshippers were killed by masked gunmen.

There was also a partial protest strike in the central Sind town of Hyderabad, state radio said.

The police said 30 of the arrested activists belonged to three groups of the majority Sunni sect and six to some Shi'ite groups. "The police are interrogating them," one official said.

Witnesses said young Shi'ites, faces covered in black cloth, fired into the air with Kalashnikov rifles in the alleys of the populous central and southern districts of Karachi.

The militants roamed around the cars and on motorcycles, shouting "revenge" and "blood for blood."

Morning traffic was thin in Karachi's normally busy streets, with many people apparently staying home for fear of violence. By midday, the bustling city was deserted and public transport thinned.

Police said four people were found killed Sunday in different localities, but there was no information if the deaths were related to Saturday's violence. Two of them were shot, one was strangled and the fourth beaten to death.

The paramilitary Rangers Force said it had recovered Afghan-origin drugs and illegal arms, including assault rifles and hand grenades, from a gang near Karachi port area.

The Karachi Stock Exchange dived 22.52 points, or 1.20 per cent, to 1,857.60 with falling stocks outpacing risers by a big margin.

Night gunfire kept tension high in Karachi Sunday and hundreds of armed police guarded mosques.

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto sent a message of condolence to the families of those killed in Saturday's mosque attacks and urged the provincial government to find and punish the culprits.

Sinn Fein ponders response to Anglo-Irish peace initiative

DUBLIN (AFP) — After extending an historic olive branch to Ulster Unionists, the Sinn Fein political wing of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) Sunday set about formulating a response to the four-day-old Anglo-Irish peace initiative.

At an annual congress here, the first since the IRA declared an unconditional ceasefire six months ago, some 1,000 delegates heard President Gerry Adams Saturday tell the Unionists, "Your home is in Northern Ireland, we want you to stay."

The IRA struggle for a united Ireland had not ended, Mr. Adams said, only entered a new, non-violent phase.

On Sunday, delegates were to hear pleas for the release or transfer to Ulster of 40 Republican "political prisoners" currently held in British prisons.

And they were to debate how to react to last Wednesday's joint framework document in which British and Ireland dropped their constitutional claims to Northern Ireland and agreed to allow the province's 1.6 million inhabitants to decide their own destiny.

Unionists rejected the joint document out of hand as a "sell-out," a "nationalist agenda" and their "eviction notice" from Northern Ireland.

Although it contained what British Prime Minister John Major called a "triple-lock" guarantee against cutting

Ulster loose against the will of the people, for many Unionists it appeared to confirm their worst fears: That the British government was prepared to partition authority over the province with the Republic of Ireland.

London and Dublin have stressed that the joint proposal was not a "blueprint" for a settlement, but a talking point aimed primarily at getting all parties in the 25-year sectarian dispute around the same negotiating table.

British civil servants have been holding talks with both Sinn Fein and Protestant loyalist groups for some two months, but Sinn Fein has complained that those so-called "exploratory talks" have been dragging and should move forward to ministerial level meetings.

In an early reaction a leading figure of the second-largest of the province's Protestant groupings, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), dismissed the offer of reconciliation as a "harbinger of death."

Mr. Adams said the Republicans were not calling "for the banishment of Unionists" from Northern Ireland. "On the contrary we need them, because a peaceful, just and united society in Ireland must include all sections of the Irish people," he told the annual congress.

Weaved into Mr. Adams' words of reconciliation was the warning that pro-British Unionists, "cannot have a veto over British policy in Ulster," and that British

Prime Minister John Major "must stop pretending they have."

He was more conciliatory "even ever before towards Republican Unionists who have rejected the Anglo-Irish document."

"It is essential in this new era of possibilities that we all address honestly and openly the hurt we have caused," said Mr. Adams. "I have publicly acknowledged the hurt which Republicans have inflicted on others, and I do so again today."

However Peter Robinson, deputy leader of the DUP, dismissed the Anglo-Irish framework document as "Major's white flag."

He said the Republican leaders had "gloatingly accepted his surrender but they have not and will not receive the surrender of the Unionist people who will continue, come what may, to reject Irish unity and Dublin rule."

He continued: "In a speech oozing with synthetic good intentions, Mr. Adams offers to 'hold out the hand of friendship' to Unionists... Unionist people know to their cost that the Provost stretched hand is the harbinger of death. They know that they still hold their weapons in their hands."

Earlier, Sinn Fein number two Martin McGuinness said the so-called joint framework document produced by London and Dublin was not an "eviction notice" as Ulster Unionists had portrayed it.

Winnie Mandela will be sacked — officials

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — President Nelson Mandela will sack his estranged wife Winnie from his government when she returns from a controversial trip to West Africa, senior government sources were quoted as saying Sunday.

The sources, quoted in the Johannesburg Sunday Times, said Mr. Mandela has already taken his decision but no announcement has been made because he wishes to personally tell her of his decision upon her return.

Mrs. Mandela defied an order Thursday by the president to cancel her official visit to Ghana, Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast, saying through her private secretary that the order came after her plane had already taken off.

A senior government source told AFP the president was "hopping mad" over the incident.

Mrs. Mandela, deputy minister of arts, culture, science and technology, also said the visit, principally to attend the PanAfrican Film and Television Festival in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, could not be cancelled at the last minute as it would damage South Africa's standing in West Africa.

Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, in Brussels to attend a Group of Seven conference, told reporters Saturday that a decision on Mrs. Mandela's future will be made later this week.

The matter, he added, will be discussed when he returns Saturday from a trip to the United States.

"We sent a message to (Mrs. Mandela) last week saying she should not travel... because of all the things we needed to discuss back home," Mr. Mbeki said.

"On Thursday, as I was getting ready to leave for Brussels, I was told she had left to go to West Africa," he said. "I had discussions with President Mandela and we decided to deal with the matter on my return from the U.S. as we needed to speak to her anyway."

Mrs. Mandela was scheduled to return to South Africa on March 6, but her private secretary has been trying to get her back earlier.

Two weeks ago, the president ordered his wife to retract her criticism of the government of national unity or resign.

She resumed her job by issuing a humiliating apology for her remarks.

The ANC National Executive Committee, meeting be-

hind closed doors in Cape Town this weekend, was expected to discuss another controversy involving Mrs. Mandela — her behaviour as president of the ANC Women's League.

Eleven members of the league resigned two weeks ago claiming Mrs. Mandela was defying executive rulings and being "authoritarian."

Two of those who resigned claimed that 500,000 rands (\$143,000) donated to the league last year by Pakistan's Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto was never handed over by Mrs. Mandela.

The deputy minister is also embroiled in another row involving the Pretoria Regional Services Council (PRSC) which says she attempted to obtain a legal settlement of a claim in excess of 80 million rands (\$22.2 million) from public funds in favour of a person who had undertaken to do free work for one of her charities.

In a statement on the matter, the Liberal Democratic Party said it was apparent that "at all material times Mrs. Mandela used the office, authority, stationery and staff of her deputy ministry to interfere with a matter which fell completely outside her realm of authority."

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Tension can't help

MARATHON TALKS in Cairo between Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres failed to nudge Israel closer to reality in its posture on nuclear weapons in the Middle East. The Cairo negotiations aimed to break the deadlock between the two states over the future of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), but Israel refused to commit itself to joining the accord in return for Egypt's renewal of its membership during the upcoming review conference in New York in April. The furthest that Mr. Peres would go to meet Egypt's demand for a quid pro quo agreement is to signal some kind of "intent" to "consider" signing and ratifying the NPT at an "unspecified" time, rumoured to be two years or so, after the conclusion of comprehensive peace in the region that would span not only the Arab countries but also Iran and possibly Pakistan as well.

Because President Mubarak did not take the Israeli bait and insisted on a definitive pledge with the time factor spelled out in the clearest possible way, it was evident perhaps that the tension between the two countries would become even more serious. While we do not expect the dispute to get out of hand over this particular issue, strategists might worry that any breakdown in Egyptian-Israeli talks on the nuclear issue could only dampen hopes and have negative implications on other Arab fronts with Israel. Egypt does not stand alone in its bid to rid the area from all mass destruction bombs. The making of the Middle East a nuclear, biological and chemical free zone has been the hallmark of Arab policy ever since the introduction of these awesome arsenals to the international scene in general and the Middle East in particular.

There is a conviction across the board in the Arab World that unless Israel's nuclear ambitions are checked sooner or later other Arab or Islamic countries would opt to end the Israeli monopoly. Better than giving loose promises, Israel should entertain a regional scheme for security and cooperation that can be backed up and guaranteed by the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council. Otherwise, the concerned Arab capitals should also adopt a "wait and see" policy on the NPT till Israel's sight on its extension becomes clearer and more reassuring.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

COMMENTING on efforts by Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinian leadership to ensure the repatriation of the Palestinian refugees and displaced persons, a writer in Al Ra'i said that Jordan has all the right to insist on the refugees' return to their homeland since the Kingdom was the party that bore the brunt of the wars with Israel in the past five decades. Tawfiq Abul Rub said that Jordan has given refuge to the displaced persons and has been providing them with all possible assistance. It is the duty of the international community to see to it that the Kingdom is relieved of this heavy burden and to force the Israelis to accept the repatriation of Palestinians in implementation of U.N. resolutions, he stressed. The writer said that the Palestinian leadership should cling hard to its demand for the repatriation of the displaced people who have suffered for so long. Noting that Egypt was joining hands with the Palestinians and Jordanians to seek the return of the displaced people, the writer said that joint efforts and collective stand in this concern was bound to bring pressure to bear on Israel and the world community to see to it that justice is restored and the rights of the displaced people are respected.

A WRITER in Al Dustour criticised the U.S. administration for what he said is its double standards in dealing with Islamic fundamentalism. Saleh Qallab said that while the United States openly declares war on the Islamists of the Arab World and openly declares its desire to bring down the regimes of Sudan and Iran, we find it at the same time holding contacts with these regimes and with the Islamists in Algeria and Egypt. The writer drew attention to the fact that Washington was continually condemning Hamas but is opening dialogue with the movement's leader, Mousa Abu Marzouq. He said that instead of lifting the embargo on Iraq, which is opposed to Iran and Islamic fundamentalism, Washington is trying to promote diplomatic ties with Tehran and further tightening the noose around Baghdad. The writer said that while Washington openly declares its support of the Palestine National Authority in its quest to achieve peace with Israel despite Hamas's opposition, it is continuing to freeze the Palestinian leadership's assets in the U.S. banks. The Egyptian President, Hosni Mubarak, is not the only person expressing dissatisfaction with such American policies, said the writer. Most governments of the region are showing discontent. The writer said Washington ought to reexamine its policy and address the situation, which is costing Washington its credibility.

Human Rights File

Pensioners' rights should be realised

By Waleed Sa'di

LATE LAST year, His Majesty King Hussein took a bold step to rectify the dire economic conditions of military and civil service pensioners by calling on the government of former prime minister Abdul Salam Majali to improve pensions across the board. The government of Majali took the easy course by instituting increments to all pensioners on a rather uniform basis with relatively little variance between very old, old and recent pensioners.

The picture that emerged from this initiative and the governmental reaction left much to be desired, especially when it basically left the very old and old pensioners essentially where they have always been. To add 25 dinars to the salary of an old pensioner, whose base pension, for example, is below JD 100, would simply keep him or her essentially in the same old dire economic condition. Instead of near uniform increases in pensions, the government should have resorted to a contemporary scheme based on cost of living indexes.

Pension adjustments to keep pace with inflation would give much higher increases to old pensioners than new ones and in the process bridge the existing dangerous gap between the two categories. It must be remembered that an old junior pensioner has to live and has the right to live as a recent junior pensioner. The same goes for senior and semi-senior former civil servants or military personnel. The differences between their pensions cannot and should not be unreasonable since both old and new have to make ends meet.

This is where the government of Dr. Majali went wrong in the translation of King Hussein's directives into deeds. It

would have been infinitely wiser and more equitable had the government overhauled the entire pension law by introducing the cost of living index formula. With pensions linked to the index on cost of living, there would be no need to take periodic actions to alleviate the hardships of pensioners. The adoption of the index-based pension plan would automatically adjust pensions old and new in accordance with the prevailing cost of living and in the process end the unfair disparity between old and new pensioners. This has been the practice of other countries, especially the most advanced ones among them.

This issue is obviously a human rights concern since the right to live decently is a cornerstone of all human rights endeavours. Eliminating differential treatment between old and new pensioners is also a cardinal principle in human rights law that needs to be reckoned with fairly and squarely. That's why advanced countries do not apply the existing Jordanian pension system. No wonder many pensioners from both the military and civil sectors were not satisfied with their lot even after the King's first directive on the subject. Due to the past injustice with regard to old pensioners, a team representing retired servicemen have sought and received audience with King Hussein in mid Ramadan in a bid to explain further their plight. No doubt civil servants would have wished to be accorded a similar hearing had they also formed a comparable committee to represent them. Once again, the ex-military servicemen proved that they are much better organised than their ex-civil servants counterparts and more active

lobbyists for their cause and welfare.

King Hussein reacted to their appeal and acted boldly and effectively when he called on Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker to complete what the former government had set out to accomplish but did not. The message of the King was loud and clear: Remove the unfair disparities between old and new pensioners from both the military and civil service. No doubt the Monarch wanted this aspect also dealt with in the first place but somehow some immediate constraints left his wishes half fulfilled.

The minister of finance then must have cautioned that bridging the gap as suggested would entail huge expenditures that the government can ill-afford. I feel that such an answer does not correspond with the reality.

But one easy way out of this is to put on hold increases in pensions of new pensioners till there can be a fundamental amendment on the pensions of the older generations of retired military and civil servants. The principal aim should be to erase the huge differences between the different generations of pensioners before attempting to improve even more the pensions of most recent ones.

Ending the disparity in the pensions of the two groups should be the primary objectives even if at the expense of recent pensioners. There is no doubt the government of Sharif Zeid will this time act on the reaffirmed royal directive. We all should be grateful for the clear vision of King Hussein on this issue and thank him for coming to the rescue of a large group of Jordanians who had been done injustice for much too long.

Is Algeria staring disaster in the face?

By Francis Ghiles

"VISITS TO the cemetery are increasingly frequent. Gravestones are lined up as in Sarajevo, in a sinister, chronological order." Thus in a few sparse words does the Spanish writer, Juan Goytisolo, sum up the violence which has engulfed Algeria since, in January 1992, its military rulers cancelled elections the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) seemed sure to win. Despite the barbarity of the acts committed by the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), Mr. Goytisolo's lucid account convincingly explains that the roots of the present violence spring less from religious convictions than from a deep-seated sense of economic and social injustice.

So far, the major impact of the conflict has been human — up to 40,000 people have been killed, hundreds if not thousands tortured, while tens of thousands of professionally qualified Algerians have taken refuge abroad. The atrocities committed by supporters of radical Islamic movements and members of the security forces and television images encouraging Algerians to hate or fear their neighbours will have an enduring pathological effect on the minds of the young. The civil war is also having an ever more costly economic impact.

To date, it has not had any negative impact on the country's ability to export oil, gas and condensates. No attacks have been perpetrated against oil or gas pipelines, against oil refineries, liquefied natural gas (LNG) plants or other hardware in the two hydrocarbons export bases, the ports of Arzew just outside Oran, the capital of western Algeria and the country's second city, and Skikda, which lies to the east, half way between Algiers and the Tunisian border. Were such attacks to occur, they could cripple an economy which depends for 96 per cent of its foreign income on the export of oil and gas.

Mounting economic cost

The economic cost of the conflict is nonetheless steadily mounting, with the amount of physical damage already inflicted on the infrastructure estimated at around \$3bn. More than 600 schools have been put to the torch, as have 30 institutes of higher education, as the GIA has sought to prevent young Algerians from being educated by an "impious state." Telephone exchanges have been destroyed, factories severely damaged or burnt down, state-owned vehicles destroyed. The burning of forests by the security forces attempting to flush out GIA groups will have a severe impact on an environment badly managed by an ambitious policy of industrialisation which never paid much attention to the amount of scarce farming land and water resources it was consuming.

The general state of insecurity and political upheaval means that neither industrial plant nor civilian buildings, notably Algeria's housing stock, which is of poor quality when new or otherwise very old, are being maintained. Dams

and ports are slowly silting up. The bill is already a heavy one.

One senior member of the state oil and gas company, Sonatrach, Arezki Boudjema, was murdered last autumn. So were two foreign engineers working for Schlumberger on a drilling site near Batna in the mountains south east of Algiers. The hijacking on Christmas Eve of the Air France Airbus at Algiers airport has revived fears that terrorists might target Sonatrach's facilities in Arzew and Skikda.

Last year, exports of natural gas amounted to 31.5bn cubic metres, 18.1bn which were in the form of LNG. According to the monthly Gas Matters, deliveries of LNG were severely curtailed last autumn as a result of the delay in starting up the GL22 gas liquefaction train in Arzew, which is being revamped by US contractor MW Kellogg. The closure lasted twice as long as the 45 days initially planned. This, however, is a once-in-20 years operation and the terminal was back in service by Christmas. The delay and its impact on shipments during the peak season mainly explains why LNG exports last year declined by 10 per cent. Exports of piped gas, which go to Italy through the Trans-Med pipeline, declined by 10 per cent to 13.5bn cu m due to a combination of mild weather last autumn and the fact that the country had topped up its stored gas during the previous two years. The shortfall in sales is estimated to have cost Sonatrach up to \$300m.

Construction of the 1,850km Maghreb Europe Pipeline (GME) which, by mid-1996, should add some 7.2bn cu m of gas to the annual pipeline export capacity of Sonatrach, appears to be going ahead

according to schedule. Three bases from which the work will be carried out are under construction, for the U.S. Bechtel company, which is in charge of that portion of the pipeline which runs 530 km from the gas field of Hassi R'Mel to the Moroccan frontier. Construction of the 540 km Moroccan section of the pipeline is on schedule, while the 45 km underwater pipeline to carry the gas across the Strait of Gibraltar to Spain and Portugal was completed last December.

Economic reforms held up

The rising tide of violence also calls into question the ability of the Algerian government to implement the package of economic reform it agreed with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) last spring. Backed up by a \$1bn IMF loan and followed by a re-scheduling of that part of its \$26bn foreign debt it owed to leading Western state creditors, the agreement is due to be renewed next spring. Algeria's foreign creditors are increasingly doubtful that loss-making state companies can be re-structured, let alone privatised, with a minimum of political consensus. They are convinced it would spell political disaster if shares in such companies were sold to members of the ruling nomenklatura and their business intermediaries, people who have used the long-standing state monopoly of foreign trade as a means of illicit enrichment for a quarter of a century and whose hold on the levers of power helps to explain the predicament the country is now in. In announcing in early February that Algeria would seek another one-year agreement with the IMF rather

than the more usual three-year one, Algerian Finance Minister Ahmad Benbitour implicitly acknowledged that the option of "deepening" the reforms was simply not realistic.

Many of the reforms agreed with the IMF have been enacted: The budget deficit has been cut from 9.3 to 5.4 per cent of gross national product, many prices have been freed, the dinar has been devalued by 43 per cent since last spring. But economic growth, which the IMF had projected would be 3 per cent, has only reached 0.4 per cent, an increase which offers little prospect of desperately needed new jobs — there are 250,000 new entrants on the labour market every year. Nor has Algeria truly liberalised its foreign trade, many say.

The director-general of the IMF, Michel Camdessus, has spearheaded efforts to mobilise Algeria's creditors to support the package of reforms. He described Algeria's economic reforms as a "model for developing countries" at last October's annual meeting in Madrid. Many banks and diplomats are less sanguine. As it is, Algeria has yet to reach agreement with its commercial bank creditors on the terms on which it can re-schedule that part of its foreign commercial bank debt which is now due. Commercial banks do not wish to be seen in any way "favouring" a government, indeed a regime, which may have to give way to different political forces in the near future.

Economic relations with Western countries, with which Algeria conducts three quarters of its trade, are further hampered by the growing isolation the country finds itself in. All foreign companies and embassies have cut their staff to the bone or pulled

out altogether. Some countries have closed their embassies in Algiers — Denmark, Austria and Switzerland have moved their operations to Tunis. Foreign schools, notably the French, have closed. Others have moved their consular sections to Tunis or France, thus effectively making it impossible for most Algerians to travel abroad. Iberia, Air France and Alitalia, the only Western airlines which were flying to Algeria last autumn, have suspended their service until further notice, although Arab airlines such as Tunis Air and Royal Air Maroc still fly there. Because most international companies do not allow their representatives of engineers to visit the country, delays are growing as Sonatrach representatives are forced to travel abroad more often. The two dozen oil companies which are drilling in southern Algeria are flying personnel in directly from Paris or Tunis to the oil base Hassi Messaoud.

It is worth noting however that some areas of Algeria are not under curfew. This is notably the case of Oran and its immediate hinterland. People have been murdered in Oran but the atmosphere has less of the gloom and fear which bug the city of Algiers and the region around it, which has witnessed some of the worst violence.

Where does France stand?

The hijacking of the Air France plane suggests the GIA intends to carry violence into France. The longer the political stalemate goes on, the more violent the conflict is likely to become and the greater the likelihood of terrorism spreading abroad if the

GIA decides to "punish" those countries which it argues are lending undue support to the regime. Had there been a bloodbath on the tarmac in Algiers, the presidential ambitions of French Prime Minister Balladur would have been dashed. Hence the shift in the French position since then, away from the strong backing that the interior minister, Charles Pasqua, had given the Algerian regime towards the more moderate position supported by Foreign Minister Juppé.

Hence also Mr. Juppé's conciliatory remarks after the meeting which brought together in Rome eight Algerian opposition parties in January. Together these parties polled nearly 90 per cent of the popular vote in the first round of the elections of late 1991. The platform they agreed upon was denounced by the Algerian government and those senior army commanders who still believe they can "eradicate" fundamentalism. Other officers have given support to those attempting a dialogue, not because they support the idea of an Islamic republic, even less because they entertain any illusion about the difficulty of reaching a minimal political consensus after three years of strife. But they are aware that Algeria could well be staring disaster in the face. If the current confrontation between the fundamentalists and the army goes on much longer, and the country's oil and gas earning capacity is impaired, the ensuing chaos would make governing Algeria an even less enviable task than it is at present.

Francis Ghiles is a writer and consultant on North African affairs. The article is reprinted from Middle East International.

America's changing priorities

What matters now is trade not the cold war, not tanks but Toyotas

In this report, Martin Walker finds the U.S. is redefining where its interests lie

IT WAS foreign policy that made Jay Murrell record a tape in his living room, round up a couple of businessmen as sponsors, and cajole his local radio station in Shreveport, Louisiana, into making him a talk-show host.

"It was disgust, I guess. Bill Clinton got elected because he said he was gonna be our president, and old George Bush was president for just about everywhere else on the planet. And then Clinton gets in and it's Bosnia. It's Somalia. It's Haiti. It's foreign aid for Russia and it's bailing out Mexico. It's the U.N. It's tamination everywhere except America."

That is the demotic version of the line of Jeane Kirkpatrick, President Reagan's ambassador to the U.N., who claims: "The Clinton administration offers us a vision of foreign policy from which national self-interest is purged."

In similar vein, David Funderburk represents the new face of American foreign policy. As a former U.S. ambassador, he is by far the most experienced of the 73 new Republican congressmen. But he walked out of his embassy in Romania in 1985, declaring that on principle the U.S. should have no relations with the Ceausescu regime.

"We are lurching from crisis to crisis without anyone in the White House bothering to identify our own national security interests," he says. "Unless our foreign priorities are overhauled, we'll surrender the initiative to pariahs like North Korea, Iraq, Iran and Libya — if we haven't done so already."

Mr. Funderburk could be called the congressman for the U.S. expeditionary force. Tens of thousands of his constituents come from Fort Bragg, home of the 82nd Airborne and U.S. special forces, and from the airmen of Pope Air Force Base, who carry them to war.

"Seventeen men from Fort Bragg died in Somalia for something they call nation-building. When they are asked to risk their lives, I'll do everything I can to ensure it is only to defend



BUTTER BEFORE GUNS: Workers guano, Beijing's 'Silicon Valley'. China's vast economic potential is about to occupy more of U.S. foreign policy planners' time, while enthusiasm for sending troops on United Nations peacekeeping mission is waning in Washington

the vital interests of the American people, not to fulfill the dreams of some faceless bureaucrat at the U.N."

The demonising of the U.N. is the main thrust of the new Republican Congress and its speaker, Newt Gingrich, who says the Clinton administration is "gripped by a multinational fantasy and continues to subordinate the United States to the United Nations."

Rather more nationalist than previous speakers, Mr. Gingrich brings a flavour of American Gaulism to his support for prestige projects like space stations. But he supported the Mexican bail-out, supports NATO and its extension into Eastern Europe, and backs Mr. Clinton's free-trade strategy.

The British ambassador to the U.S., Sir Robin Renwick, sees bipartisan internationalism holding up pretty well, even as it shifts from leading a military alliance against the Soviet Union to leading a global economic process based on free trade.

"Whether you look at the Clinton administration, or at the various Republican candidates who will challenge for the presidency in 1996, they are all interna-

nationalists and they are all free-traders," Sir Robin said.

Senator Phil Gramm, the Republican 1996 presidential frontrunner in fundraising and organisation, proves Sir Robin's point.

"There has always been a receptive gene in the American character that is isolationist," Mr. Gramm said. "That gene had been recessive for over a generation because our leaders were willing to stand up and say no to it. Today there are elements in both parties, but more in the Democrats, who are not prepared to say no."

"There is nobody in our party more committed to free trade than me, or more committed to fulfilling our leadership role in the world."

Beyond trade, this need for U.S. leadership is so important you cannot weigh the politics of it. Now the lion and the lamb may be lying down together all over the world, but even in that world, we Republicans are committed to being the lion.

Senator Robert Dole, the Republican presidential hopeful who leads in the opinion polls, says he established his internationalist credentials 50 years ago when his arm was shattered

by German bullets on an Italian battlefield.

Mr. Dole exemplifies the new fault line in U.S. foreign priorities. He entirely supports the free-trade agenda, but he dislikes the U.N., and shrinks from sending U.S. troops overseas. And despite the old rule that party politics stopped at the water's edge, Mr. Dole has exploited Mr. Clinton's clumsiness in Somalia and Haiti, and his dithering over Bosnia.

"The one thing that Clinton and Dole and Gingrich have in common is that they realise the foreign policy agenda has changed," says Frances Fitzgerald, whose book on the history of America in Vietnam, *Fire in the Lake*, won a Pulitzer Prize.

"There's a big constituency out there for human rights, a huge one for foreign trade, but the classic agenda of NATO and the European balance of power just seems irrelevant. Maybe Asia seems closer, because if foreign policy used to be about tanks, now it seems to be about Toyotas. But what people have thought of as classic foreign policy throughout my lifetime — the Kremlin and Europe — just doesn't connect to peoples' lives any more."

This is doubtless premature, but the last rites have already been pronounced over NATO by Irving Kristol, fellow of American Enterprise Institute and most formidable of the former leftwing intellectuals who became the neo-conservatives.

"The cold war is over, and with it a phase of world history, the European phase. The nations of Europe are still of great technological, economic and cultural importance, but their foreign policies no longer count for much," argues Mr. Kristol. "Europe is no longer the cockpit of the world, and NATO is an organisation without a mission, a cold war relic."

"The foreign policy problems that the U.S. will be facing henceforth are (not) European. First, there is Mexico. Second, there is the rise of fundamentalist Islam in North Africa and the Middle East. Third, there is the near inevitable rise of China as the dominant Asian power. Reinventing NATO is a vast irrelevance. Let it slide into obsolescence."

Mr. Kristol is not turning to isolation, but changing the geography and priorities of U.S. concern.

To James Baker, former

secretary of state, "the creation of a global, liberal economic regime is America's greatest post-war achievement." For Mr. Clinton's national security adviser, Tony Lake, U.S. strategy is to build "a global civil society through enlargement of the core of major market democracies."

There is a Clinton doctrine, although he is too wary of the protectionists in his own party to trumpet it as a loud. It is plain in Mr. Clinton's readiness to split his party to enact the North American Free Trade Agreement and to ratify the Uruguay Round of the GATT world trade system.

It is plain still in his cajoling of the Asia-Pacific Economic Conference to endorse his plan for a Pacific Rim free-trade zone by the year 2020, and last December's Miami summit where the countries of the Western Hemisphere agreed to their own free trade area from Alaska to Argentina by 2010.

The Clinton doctrine is trade. Mr. Clinton's problem is that most Americans think of foreign trade as a deficit of more than \$100 billion a year. That is true for manufactured trade, but the U.S. surplus on services, from banking to

royalties and licence fees, was \$80 billion last year. And the fact that U.S.-owned factories overseas command a greater share of global manufacturing exports than factories on U.S. soil means that, in fact, the U.S. runs a modest profit on its dealings with a global economy, which contributes about a quarter of America's GDP.

Mr. Clinton is already bidding for history's mantle as the free trade president, the first world leader who understood that the geo-strategic world of the cold war had become a new age of geo-economics. Or he was, until the Mexican financial crisis and the looming trade war with China undermined the promise of the free trading doctrine.

To Art Hilgart, a retired pharmaceutical executive in Kalamazoo, Michigan, who circulates a small newsletter steeped in jazz and traditional liberalism, it is not Mr. Clinton nor Mr. Gingrich, nor even the end of the cold war, that has altered foreign policy, but the changing U.S. economy.

"The real difference is fear," says Mr. Hilgart. "Americans are more frightened for their own economic future, so they are less willing to help any

other group. That includes Americans on welfare or foreigners of any kind. The old security we had for a generation after World War II, when most people with a job could expect to buy a house and send a kid to college, has just gone."

Sidney Blumenthal can claim to have predicted the drift to U.S. isolation in his book on the 1988 presidential election, *Pledging Allegiance*: the last campaign of the Cold War. Having turned down an offer to be Mr. Clinton's speechwriter, Mr. Blumenthal worries about the political implications of the president's free trade enthusiasms.

"A regime of free trade that at the same time is widening class divisions cannot sustain internationalism. It is seen as the property of the privileged, those insulated from the buffeting of the global market," he argues. "We reduce foreign policy to raw economic rewards, and oppose international commitments because they siphon resources away from home."

"Internationalism in the post-war era was fitted on to the society made by the New Deal, a society that was becoming both richer and more equal, and could therefore act and think as one. Social harmony at home, achieved by reform, provided the bedrock for the active internationalism of the Cold War. That bedrock has now gone. We are now a polarised society, breeding new class conflicts through divisive politics and social resentment."

If American society is fragmenting, so is the world it wants to deal with. Europeans fear a diminished U.S. involvement. Asians fear they are being forced to swallow too much. The desperately poor world fears the end of foreign aid, while free trade partners like Mexico gasp at the price of a U.S. bail-out, which demands their oil production as collateral.

A weak president seeks to maintain America's global influence on the cheap, scaling back the military commitments while turning a bigger profit through ever more free trade.

If the model looks familiar, it is Britain's splendid isolation of the 19th century. But that depended on a political will to enforce a Pax Britannica, which looks unlikely from a superpower that scuttles from Somalia after losing 18 soldiers in a day. And Pax Britannica ended in the first world war.

The Guardian

Crown Prince meets businessmen

(Continued from page 1)

development of the Jordan Valley and the general agricultural and industrial sectors.

On the level of the citizens and expectations of fruits of peace, the Crown Prince said Jordan was expecting external help, and this could come in the form of budget sup-

port or in write-off of the Kingdom's debts.

However, such help might not mean direct and immediate benefits to the citizen, he said, adding that a distinction should be made between major regional economic initiatives and the movement of foreign capital and Jordan's economic needs.

Israel scales down blockade

(Continued from page 1)

Israeli dailies said the blockade was a reprisal for the harassment by Lebanese troops of people going in and out of the Israeli-occupied "security zone" in South Lebanon.

A senior Hizbollah official in the Tyre region, Mohammad Feneish, said Israel was not only trying to crush his movement, but also aiming to force Beirut to distance itself from Syria in peace talks with Israel.

"In plain terms it's a form of harassment versus harassment," said an Israeli source who declined to be identified.

Israeli security sources said residents of the zone have complained in recent weeks that Lebanese authorities forced them to undergo protracted security checks at checkpoints, interrogating them for hours, cursing them and accusing them of collaborating with Israel.

They quoted the residents as saying Lebanese troops stopped their cars on the other side of checkpoints, suspecting the residents of plotting suicide bombings.

The source said the blockade sent a "strong but measured signal" at a time when Israel has forsworn major retaliatory assaults, and wants to avoid marring a mediation swing in the region by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher next month.

On Saturday, Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri said after conferring with Syrian leaders in Damascus that Lebanon would not give up its rights to end Israeli occupation even if the fishing blockade were extended and Israeli attacks were intensified.

"Israel wants one thing only: that Lebanon bows to its will to reach a solution. It will not work," Mr. Hariri said after talks with Syrian Vice President Abdul Halim Khaddam.

"Israel is capable of attacking Lebanon. It does that every day, every hour, but it will not be able to force us into accepting its regional politics and plan... no matter how strong the pressure gets," Mr. Hariri said.

Two weeklies suspended

(Continued from page 12)

said. "We're going back to the martial law era."

Al Bilad obtained a licence to print locally in June 1993, a month after the new Press and Publications Law was enacted. Before that and from 1991 to 1993 it used to print abroad.

According to Mr. Tourah, his newspaper faced overstate ment and confiscation several times before and after the enactment of the press law. Hawadeth Al Sa'ah was licensed in June. Rjad Al Hroub, publisher of Hawadeth Al Sa'ah and Shihan, accused the government of conspiring against them.

"They (the government) are looking for ways to hurt us," he said. "I believe it is done on purpose."

Dr. Hroub said he will appoint a new but temporary chief editor until Mr. Shaw-

been takes the oath.

The two newspapers as well as Shihan, have come under attack by JPA because of what the association described as the newspapers' tendency to overstate facts and publish material that infringed on general ethics and moral standards.

In a memo sent last month to the chief editors of the three weeklies the JPA threatened to refer them to a disciplinary council if they refused to comply with the pertinent laws and regulations. JPA charged then that the newspapers were publishing fabricated stories, obscene photos and inaccurate news.

However, Mr. Amin said his decision to close the two weeklies "has nothing to do with other issues." He said he was "only applying the law."

Aloni proposes land swap

(Continued from page 1)

Strip's 800,000 residents could move to the area, she said.

Ahmad Qouria, economics minister in the Palestine National Authority (PNA) rejected the proposal, saying: "Expanding the Gaza Strip should not be at the expense of other Palestinian land in the West Bank."

Palestinians have demanded a halt to all settlement activity, especially in Israel's vaguely defined "greater Jerusalem" area, encompassing Arab East Jerusalem. Palestinians view settlements as a provocation and,

having taken over most of the Gaza Strip under a peace deal with Israel, now seek the return of all of the West Bank.

Environment Minister Yossi Sarid, who belongs to Ms. Aloni's Meretz faction, this month proposed paying Palestinians one billion shekels (\$333.3 million) a year while barring them from Israel to prevent attacks inside the Jewish state. That idea has yet to catch on.

More than 140,000 Jews live among one million Palestinians in the West Bank.

Four years after the war, Kuwaitis less enchanted with U.S.

By Diana Elias
The Associated Press

KUWAIT — Dancing in the streets and waving American flags, Kuwaitis four years ago had nothing but gratitude and admiration for their U.S. saviours.

They would brook no criticism of the country that led the 35-nation coalition which liberated the tiny, oil-rich emirate from seven months of Iraqi occupation on Feb. 26, 1991.

Today the mood is less buoyant. American clothes, cars, pop music, trends and styles are still popular, especially among the young. And pictures of former president George Bush, regarded as the man who assembled the Gulf war coalition, hang on walls in offices, stores and homes.

But more and more Kuwaitis are growing about what they perceive as heavy-handed U.S. efforts to force the tiny emirate to help achieve peace between Israel and the Arabs and to remain a regular client for U.S. arms.

Some also doubt America's sincerity, believing the Western giant is more interested in Kuwait's oil wealth than its social, political and economic health.

One popular theory is that Washington, keen to get control of Kuwait's oil

reserves, was in league with Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein in his attempt to annex the emirate.

"They're making money out of protecting us," said Walid Al Fadi, a 26-year-old civil servant. "Saddam could be an agent for them."

If oil wasn't the main reason Americans freed Kuwait, "why didn't it liberate Palestine," which has no oil? he said.

"The Kuwaiti-American marriage is experiencing some kind of a mild, acrimonious feud," said Abdullah Al Shayej, political science teacher at Kuwait University and political adviser to parliament.

"The grass roots support for the United States is still very solid. But there have been some dissenting voices."

Dissent becomes particularly noticeable on the issue of Israel and its relations with the Arab World.

Officially, Kuwait backs the peace process with Israel and says it will normalise relations with the Jewish state once Syria and Lebanon follow Jordan and the Palestinians in signing peace accords.

Islamic fundamentalists, however, cannot stomach the idea of having an Israeli embassy in Kuwait or of doing business with Israelis.

Kuwait and the other

members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have lifted the boycott on companies that do business with Israel. But the ban on direct dealings with Israeli companies will remain, they said, until the Arab League decides otherwise.

When the foreign ministry issued a statement condemning January's suicide bombing in Israel that killed 21 soldiers, some parliament members protested sardonically.

They termed the bombing a "heroic operation". One Islamic fundamentalist lawmaker, Abdullah Al Hajiri, said the government had been pressured by Washington to condemn the explosion.

Because of radical forces in the Arab World, Kuwait cannot risk being seen as too close to Washington, said Mr. Al Shayej, the political adviser.

"Americans should know that they shouldn't push us too far," he said. "We have many other countries who want to share the pie of rebuilding Kuwait."

Since liberation, Kuwait has spent about \$50 billion on repairing its infrastructure, including electricity, water and oil installations, and other government buildings. And more remains to be done.

Although doubts about American resolve to protect the emirate were assuaged

by its prompt response to Iraq's military buildup near the border with Kuwait last October, more Kuwaitis are willing to believe conspiracy theories.

Abdullah Al Nafeesi, a political science teacher at Kuwait University, told the Al Watan daily recently that regional instability would allow the United States to keep Kuwait a willing arms client.

The government has committed nearly \$12 billion to be spent on defence until 2003. Washington would like to see much of that money spent on U.S.-made weapons.

U.S. Ambassador Ryan Crocker responds to many of the criticisms when he visits drwanis, the traditional men-only gatherings. In those discussions, these arguments lose some of their stature "because the facts just don't bear them out," he said.

Shafiq Al Ghabra, a political science teacher, warned Kuwaitis not to take America for granted.

"What was done in 1991 had to do with interests more than with love and hatred... and the moment the United States does not feel it has any interests with Kuwait, it will just forget about it," he said. "And it's up to Kuwait to decide whether it wants to be forgotten or not."

BIS to survey size of global derivatives market

ZURICH (R) — The Bank for International Settlements (BIS) said Sunday it would conduct the first-ever comprehensive survey of the global derivatives market as part of a new study of activity in the foreign exchange markets.

The derivatives survey, which will be carried out in April by bankers in 26 countries, aims to gauge the true size of this huge, but obscure market and better understand the role of these exotic financial instruments in transferring risks.

Derivatives get their name from being deriving their value from an underlying investment like a bond or stock. They are used to hedge against risk or to make big speculative gains.

Last year saw a series of well-publicised losses on derivatives by blue-chip companies. This raised the spectre that huge losses from derivative deals may threaten the global financial system.

The survey's primary objective is to gather comprehensive and internationally consistent data and thus make up for the shortcomings of existing data, the BIS said in a report by a working group established by the Group of 10 (G-10) major industrialised countries.

"The survey focuses on the size of derivatives markets and on the role of these markets in the transfer of price risk," said the BIS, a central bank to the world's central bankers.

A previous foreign exchange survey by the BIS estimated global net turnover on the world's foreign exchange markets of some \$880 billion every business day in April 1992, an increase of 42 per cent from \$620 billion in April, 1989.

The 1992 survey revealed a slowdown in the growth of spot markets and that turnover of derivative products, such as swaps and futures, accounted for more than half of the turnover on the world's major foreign exchange markets.

But while the previous survey was limited to spot and derivative foreign exchange markets, the new survey is much broader and will include foreign exchange transactions, interest rate derivatives, equity and stock index derivatives and commodity derivatives, including precious metals.

Reports from G-10 central bankers have so far recognised the beneficial role of derivatives in risk management and market liquidity. However, bankers have also called attention to the effect derivatives can have on the execution of monetary policy and at times derivatives can adversely affect market liquidity and the volatility of the underlying assets.

The current lack of transparency in derivatives markets can make it difficult for market participants and authorities alike to make informed judgement about the scale, structure and distribution of risks in these markets, the BIS said.

In response, a G-10 working group developed methods and techniques for surveying a large number of institutions. The techniques, which will be used in the survey, will form a framework for regular reporting on the main institutions that are internationally active in the derivatives markets.

Although bankers have improved their understanding of derivatives in recent years, existing data is inadequate.

Bucking Wall Street, economists see strong economy in U.S.

WASHINGTON (R) — Wall Street is betting the economy is slowing to a more sustainable pace and the Federal Reserve (Fed) is about done raising interest rates, but many analysts see robust activity and higher interest rates ahead.

These economists expect growth — after showing signs of slackening in early 1995 — will be faster than the Fed would like in coming months. They foresee strong exports of U.S. goods, healthy business spending on plants and equipment as well as plenty of consumer spending.

They say indications of a slowdown in January probably represent nothing more than consumers and businesses taking a breather after the burst of economic activity in the fourth quarter, when the economy grew a sizzling 4.5 per cent.

"The operating phrase for the current economy is that we're in a pause," said Sam Kahan of Fuji Securities Inc. "This is the pause that refreshes."

The bond market rallied and the blue-chip Dow Jones index vaulted over the 4,000-point level for the first time ever last week on hopes the Fed would keep rates steady amid signs of an economic slowdown.

The Fed has doubled short-term rates, raising them three percentage points since last

February to slow growth and head off inflation. The Fed's seven rate increases are aimed at slowing the economy to a growth rate of around 2.5 per cent.

Traders welcomed comments by Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan that the central bank might leave rates unchanged as the economy cools. But economists think Wall Street is getting ahead of itself and a stronger-than-expected economy will generate a pickup in inflation, though not a dramatic one.

"We're in a slowdown, but I think the markets have exaggerated the slowdown," said Marilyn Schaja of Donaldson, Lufkin, Jenrette Securities Corp.

"The economy still has a lot of good upward momentum," said William Griggs of Griggs Santow Inc. "You're still going to have a growth rate that will push prices higher and force the Fed to respond."

Mr. Griggs expects the central bank to boost short-term rates two more times this year, or another full percentage point, in response to upward pressures on wages, resources and prices.

In its semiannual forecast to Congress last week, the Fed predicted the growth in output of goods and services would slow to between 2.0 per cent and 3.0 per cent in 1995 from 4.0 per cent in

1994. "We think the economy is going to be stronger than the Fed thinks," said Mr. Griggs.

David Jones of Aubrey G. Lanston Co. said consumers "have passed to catch their breath" after a late 1995 spending spree. "It's only going to be a pause, because the consumer's financial condition is in pretty good shape," he said.

Economists noted long-term mortgage rates have fallen to their lowest level since September. That should give consumers more money to spend down the road on houses, autos and other big-ticket items, Mr. Jones and other economists said.

Some recent data has signalled an economic slowdown.

Sales at retail stores began to slow late last year. Sales of new cars fell last month. The unemployment rate jumped in January and job growth slowed. Factory output decelerated last month and housing starts have fallen two straight months.

Mr. Greenspan told Congress "the frenetic pace, the torrid pace that we saw in economic activity that we knew was unsustainable is fortunately slowing down."

But former Fed governor Wayne Angell disagrees with his old boss, saying he thinks the "economy is stronger than the consensus view."

Economists also said January data are often skewed by quirks and seasonal adjustment problems.

And by the end of last week, fresh government data raised questions about just how much of a slowdown was at hand. Orders for big-ticket durable goods posted a surprising 0.6 per cent rise in January. It was the third straight increase.

Meanwhile, U.S. President Bill Clinton has warned that the proposed balanced budget amendment would lead to an "extreme fiscal policy" set by the courts and the Federal Reserve rather than Congress and the White House.

With the Senate scheduled to vote Tuesday on the proposed amendment to the U.S. constitution, Mr. Clinton used his weekly radio address to escalate his attack on the proposal of the majority Republicans, which would ban the government from spending more money than it takes in.

"We must continue to reduce the deficit and to strengthen our economic security," Mr. Clinton said, noting that the size of the federal deficit was reduced by \$600 billion during his first two years in office.

Mr. Clinton claimed that if the amendment, already approved by the House of Representatives, passed by a

two-thirds majority in the Senate and then was ratified by two-thirds of the states, federal spending would be heavily influenced by court ruling and the decisions of the Federal Reserve.

"The only way to preserve the American dream for our children is to make tough choices and hard decisions," Mr. Clinton said. "We can't avoid our responsibility by legislating those choices away and giving them to people who were not elected to make these decisions."

He warned the amendment would tie the hands of the federal government in hard economic times. "When the economy is weak, many people need a little extra help to get back on their feet," he said.

When the economy is bad "the last thing the American people need is a tax hike or a cut in training or an arbitrary cut in our national defence, but the balanced budget amendment would force us to make just those decisions every time the economy is weak," Mr. Clinton said.

"That kind of extreme fiscal policy makes a small recession worse," he said. "In its most exaggerated form, it's what helped to turn the economic slowdown of the 1920 into the Great Depression of the 1930s."

"The constitution clearly establishes that budgetary choices should be made by elected representatives," Mr. Clinton said.

"We do not want budget decisions affecting tens of millions of Americans being made by unelected federal judges," he added.

The issue has raised concern among a small group of Senate Democrats, led by Senator Sam Nunn of Georgia, who want the wording of the amendment changed to keep the courts out of the fiscal process — something backers have refused to do so far.

It appears the amendment is three votes short of the 67 it needs to pass, if all 100 senators vote and White House officials said Mr. Clinton spoke by telephone with individual lawmakers to press his argument.

In Marietta, Georgia, House Speaker Newt Gingrich said Saturday he would support a separate measure that would "block the court from doing any of the things that worry" Sen. Nunn.

Although Mr. Nunn was on a mission in Haiti, his office made clear that such a move would not satisfy the senator.

In his address, Mr. Clinton also warned that the actions of the Federal Reserve, which has raised interest rates seven times since last February to keep inflation under control, increased the deficit. "The last few have added more than \$100 billion to our deficit," he said.

In the Republican response, Idaho Senator Larry Craig contended that Mr. Clinton should be "helping the Senate pass the balanced budget amendment because, if we don't, our children will pay, and pay dearly."

"Every American child is born today already owing \$18,500 as his or her share of the national debt," he said. "No wonder babies cry so much."

Noting that the outcome of the Senate vote hinges on a handful of undecided Democrats, Mr. Craig called on Mr. Clinton to "call off the dogs and let senators vote their consciences."

Arabs set up network to boost internal trade

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab states have completed an ambitious project to set up a network to boost flagging trade among them as part of long-standing plans to integrate their economies, operators have said.

Several members of the Arab League have already been connected to the computerised data network at the Abu Dhabi-based Arab Monetary Fund (AMF), which is encouraging regional governments to

press ahead with reforms to boost their economies.

The project launched three years ago, will be fully operational in the next few months as the remaining members are linked, and a training course has been organised for member states.

"The network is within the framework of efforts to bolster trade and economic cooperation among Arab countries," the AMF said in a statement.

The statement did not

name the members already linked but AMF sources mentioned Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia, Morocco, Lebanon, and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The network is part of a \$500 million fund created by the AMF four years ago to finance flagging internal trade, which has remained below 10 per cent of the total Arab trade in the past two decades.

Official figures showed exports among the Arab League's 22 members stood at around \$12.88 billion in 1993, accounting for nearly nine per cent of their total exports of \$142.3 billion.

Internal imports of \$11.1 billion formed 8.7 per cent of the total imports of \$126.6 billion.

Experts blamed lack of financing, political rifts, customs barriers and problems associated with transport, storage, infrastructure and production.

To tackle the financial problem, the AMF established the Arab Trade Financing Programme (ATFP) in 1991, contributing half its capital, the rest came from other Arab banks and financial institutions.

ATFP operations cover only home-made products, except oil, with the aim of encouraging national export-

ers. It has a financing capacity of \$1 billion a year but actual activity still lags behind.

According to the AMF statement, ATFP has so far approved around \$446 million of the total value of credit applications of \$643 million.

Sources close to the ATFP said the weak demand was due to political differences after the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, similarity in the Arab production base and lack of information about regional markets. They said the data network would remove a key obstacle for low inter-Arab trade.

"Among the main factors that help boost trade among Arab states is the provision of credible information and statistics on markets, demand, trade laws, financial position of potential buyers and other information," the AMF said in a recent study.

"This has prompted the AMF to launch a project to set up an advanced data network that will be linked to all Arab markets," it added.

Officials said the network, set up with the help of the World Trade Centre and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), would distribute information to member states on regional markets, products, demand, supply, prices, and the economy of each member.

China, U.S. sign anti-piracy pact

BEIJING (R) — The United States and China averted a brewing trade war by signing an agreement Sunday to strengthen safeguards against intellectual property piracy in China and widen market access for American companies.

The accord between the two Pacific trading giants nullified more than \$2 billion worth of punitive tit-for-tat sanctions that were to have automatically taken force Sunday.

The top U.S. negotiator, Deputy Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky, hailed the deal as historic and China's minister for foreign trade and economic cooperation, Wu Yi, said it marked a turning point in their often turbulent ties.

The pact on protecting copyrights, trademarks and

patents for computer software, music, films and other intellectual property from counterfeiters in China was wrung from Beijing several hours after expiry of the deadline for the sanctions.

"It is a strong agreement, very detailed and comprehensive with respect to copyright protection and also provides for market access for U.S. entities," Ms. Barshefsky told reporters. "The U.S. is very satisfied with the agreement."

More than \$2 billion in punitive trade sanctions announced by both sides were designed to take effect automatically.

In a major concession just hours before the deadline that could have provided the breakthrough, Beijing bowed to U.S. demands and closed two of its most notorious

pirate plants.

The Shenfei laser and optical system company and the Zhushai special economic zone audio-video publishing house were ordered to stop doing business for "severe infringement up to, copyrights," the Communist Party newspaper The People's Daily, said in a front-page, boxed article.

Chinese investigators found that Shenfei, in the southern boom town of Shenzhen bordering Hong Kong, made illegal video discs of the Hollywood blockbuster film "Jurassic Park" and audio laser products for foreign buyers.

Products made by Shenfei, a plant owned partly by the local government and visited in 1992 by China's paramount leader Deng Xiaoping, were found on both the domestic

and foreign markets, it said, quoting press and publication administration officials.

The state-run Zhushai publishing house was punished for selling 13 publication numbers, or codes, to the private Zhushai Longyi audio-video company to manufacture pirated compact discs.

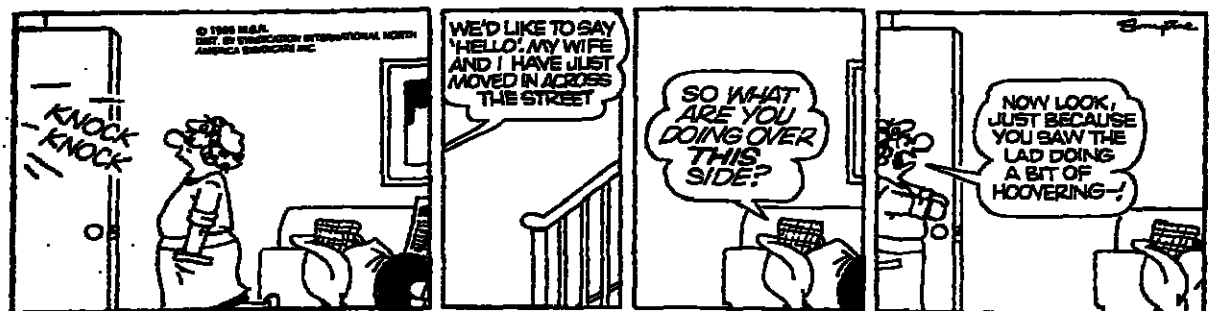
Press and publication administration teams have fanned out across east, central and southwest China to check local government work to protect intellectual property, it said.

Raid: on 29 plants in southern China, including Shenfei, alleged to be flooding Asia with pirated laser and compact discs, were a top U.S. demand as a downpayment towards building a better environment for intellectual-property protection.

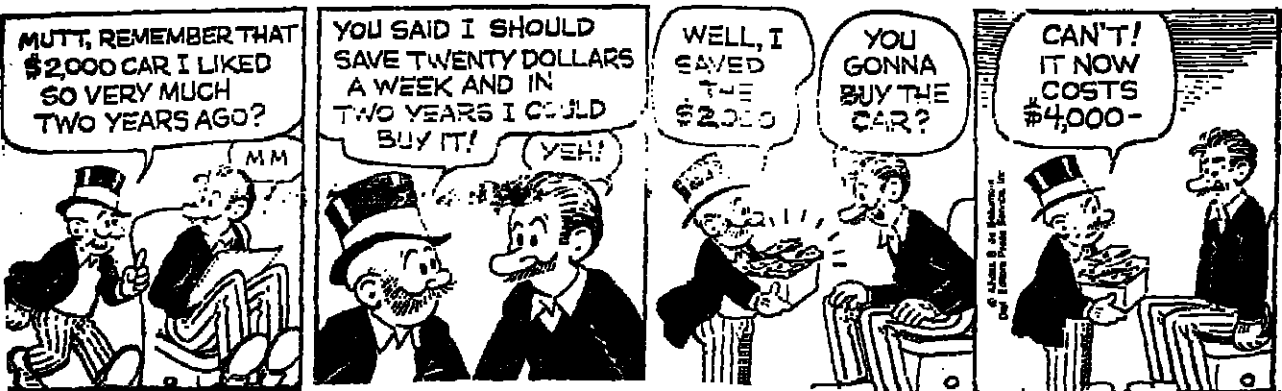
Peanuts



Andy Capp



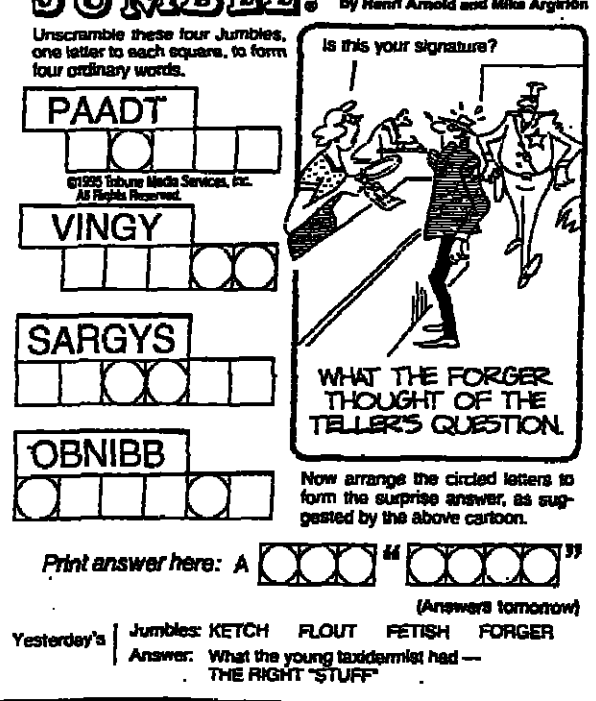
Mutt'n'Jeff



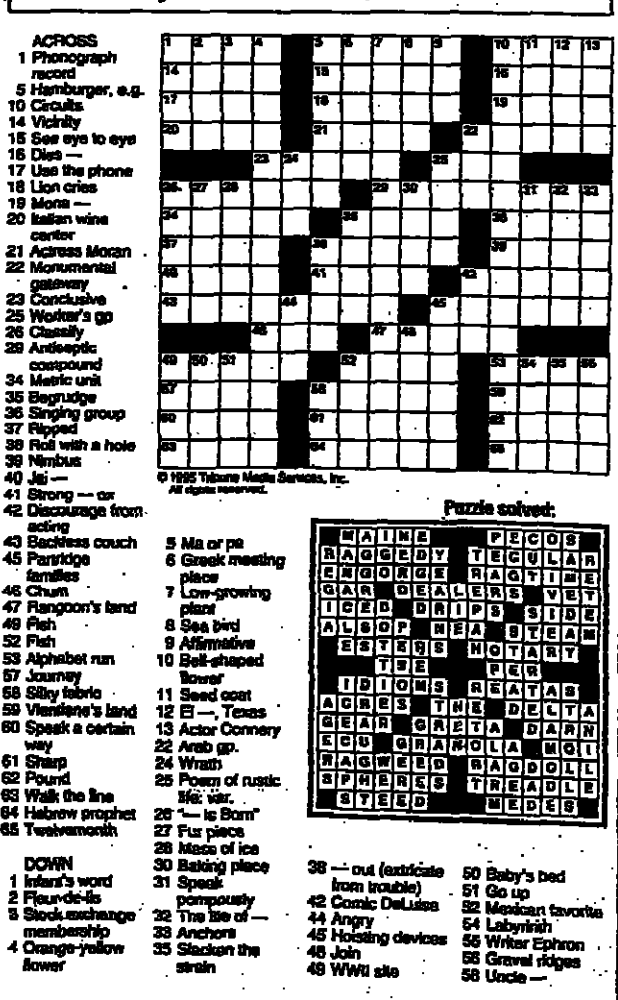
THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



JUMBLE



THE Daily Crossword by Harold B. Counts



Business Daily Beat
A review of economic news from the Arabic press

Airports' upgrading to cost JD 60m

★ Jordan plans to spend \$85 million over the next three years on upgrading its airports to absorb an expected tourism boom now it has made peace with Israel, officials reported Sunday. It was not immediately clear how the resource-poor Kingdom hopes to raise the funds for refurbishing terminals, repaving runways and modernising communications at its airport in Amman, Marka and the southern port of Aqaba. Proposals submitted by Jordan at an economic conference in Casablanca, Morocco, late last year indicated that some money was expected from donor countries. Officials confirmed figures cited by Civil Aviation Authority chief Ahmad Jweib to an interview with the mass-circulation Al Ra'i daily. He said the government has drawn up a 1995-98 plan to upgrade airports at a cost of around 60 million dinars (\$85 million). Thirteen million dinars (\$18.5 million) will be spent this year, he said, with 16 million dinars (\$22.75 million) each in 1996 and 1997 and 13.7 million dinars (\$19.5 million) in 1998. Under the Oct. 26 peace treaty that ended 46 years of hostility between Jordan and Israel, they agreed to offer joint tourism packages to the Holy Land to Americans. Both countries are rich in religious, historical and archaeological sites that date back to Biblical times. But Jordan has not been able to take full advantage of that potential because it lacks facilities while Israel has pursued an aggressive campaign to market itself. After the treaty, Royal Jordanian and El Al, the two countries' national carriers, also agreed that American tourists could land in Jordan and leave from Israel and vice-versa after spending equal time in both countries. Amman's Queen Alia International Airport, 20-30 kilometres south of the capital, is Jordan's main civil aviation facility. Marka Airport, located within the capital's boundaries, was the main international airport until 1984. Now it mainly serves VIPs and military flights. The airport at Aqaba on the Red Sea, about 350 kilometres south of Amman, is the key to the envisaged tourism packages with Israel, whose own Eilat airport a few kilometres across the Gulf of Aqaba, is unable to handle the heavy flow of visitors to the Jewish state. According to the projects presented in Casablanca, an estimated \$40 million will be spent on expanding Aqaba airport "to accommodate Israeli traffic." That will include the construction of a new runway and terminal buildings (Al Ra'i + AP).

re or fe im id l is Jb ec

Loss at blueblood London bank triggers rescue bid

LONDON (R) — The Bank of England worked against the clock Sunday to rescue a firm of venerable British bankers that faced a loss worth perhaps \$650 million, apparently run up by just one of its traders based in Singapore.

Failure by Britain's central bank to put together a deal could send new shockwaves through a global electronic marketplace that is already jittery about Mexico's debt crisis and recent falls on the Japanese stock market.

In the eye of the storm is investment bank Baring Brothers, a blueblooded aristocrat of British finance.

Queen Elizabeth is a client. Founded in 1762, it helped finance Britain's 19th century wars against Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte of France.

From what banking sources said Sunday, it seemed that a Baring trader in Singapore ran up a losing position when trading in derivative contracts linked to Tokyo share values.

The sources said that, if the bank's supervisory procedures were watertight and properly enforced, then one possible explanation could be fraud.

The potential losses may exceed Barings' capital. Bank of England Governor

Eddie George himself supervised the negotiations on the gravest crisis in British banking for more than 10 years — with a deadline before midnight London time (GMT) when a jittery Tokyo stock market starts trading.

"There must be a resolution of this issue one way or other before the Tokyo market opens," one banking source said.

A Barings official in Hong Kong confirmed that a trader in Singapore had lost the bank substantial sums in derivative deals related to Japan's Nikkei 225 stock index.

London bankers said the Barings dealer bought between 15,000 and 20,000 derivatives contracts worth almost \$200,000 each hoping for massive profits. But the gamble failed.

Derivatives — including futures, options and swaps — are traded contracts linked to basic values of commodities, currencies, shares or bonds.

Designed for hedging, they also attract speculative money. Profits from speculative trade can be huge. But so can losses if a trader bets one way and a market swings the other.

The Bank of England's George could put family firm Barings and its 4,000 employees around the globe under an administrator. But he is more likely to be looking for a buyer for all or part.

A big British or U.S. investment bank might be eager to snap up Barings asset management, a highly profitable unit that manages more than \$45 billion of assets for pension and other big funds and private individuals worldwide.

The affair's impact on world markets will depend on how convincing the rescue looks. Japanese stocks may be vulnerable.

"I believe the Nikkei average will fall from the start even if the reports are not confirmed" said Masaharu

Sakudo, general manager at Tachibana Securities in Tokyo.

An ailing British pound, pressured lately by the political woes of Conservative Prime Minister John Major, also risks a taking new hit on the foreign exchanges.

"It's just one more negative for sterling" said Nick Persons at finance house CIBC Wood Gundy.

Britain's opposition Labour Party joined a worldwide chorus that has demanded tighter control on speculative trading in derivatives — for Barings is just the latest in a series of cases where traders have lost huge sums.

German industrial group Metallgesellschaft A.G. lost \$1.5 billion in 1993 on oil derivatives deals at a U.S. subsidiary. State-owned Chilean copper mining giant Codelco lost some \$70 million in 1994 on trading in metals futures.

"Derivatives are probably

the oldest traded markets anywhere in the world," said Chris Golden, head of fixed income research at Nomura International in London.

He said rice futures were traded in Japan centuries ago.

But, said Mr. Golden, "for every winner there has to be a loser.... it's a zero-sum game."

Bankers say that firms' supervisory back offices can't monitor trading desks in the new age of rapid electronic dealing around the globe all the time. Traders must be free to show initiative. But big losing positions can build up rapidly.

Barings, with record half-year profits worth almost \$90 million last October, is no stranger to drama.

The Bank of England had to rescue it back in 1890 when it got overexposed in Argentina.

Profits earned by one of its top investment bankers, Christopher Heath, in the 1980s were legendary.

He became Britain's top paid banker earning £2.5 million (\$3.65 million) in 1986 but was spectacularly sacked in 1993 after relations at the top became strained.

The bank's highly rated corporate finance team is advising British firm Wellcome over a hostile takeover bid by fellow drugs group Glaxo. Barings also owns a 40 per cent stake in Wall Street investment bank Dillon Read.

An earlier report from Singapore said Asian markets braced for storms Monday as tight-lipped company and Singapore stock exchange officials struggled to contain potentially fatal losses at one of the most respected names in world finance.

"They don't seriously know what has happened. They're investigating it," a source from the British merchant bank Barings PLC told Reuters as officials bustled in and out of the bank's Singapore office Sunday.

"We have no comment. We're referring all matters to London," a nervous, grim-looking executive said.

Barings officials elsewhere in Asia would not comment for the record about the crisis, triggered when one trader in Singapore reportedly lost more than \$400 million (\$635 million), more than the bank's entire net worth.

A company source in Hong Kong confirmed the magnitude of the problem, saying: "Either we get bought out very quickly or we shut down."

As early evening thunderstorms swept over Singapore, another Barings source said officials from the bank's

headquarters in London had been flown in.

Barings, founded in 1762, is one of the oldest and most respected merchant banks in Britain and one of the biggest names in Far Eastern markets.

Emergency talks were under way to sell Barings to some of its businesses before Tokyo markets open on Monday morning.

If Barings is not bailed out by that deadline, traders fear it may not be able to meet its obligations in Asia, with major repercussions on regional and international financial markets.

Analysts in Japan said the news could send Tokyo's stock market reeling downward by up to 1,000 points at Monday's opening. Singapore dealers fear Tokyo will drag other Asia markets down.

Reuters reporters saw representatives of the stock exchange of Singapore entering and leaving the high-rise building where the bank has offices at various times throughout Sunday. They remained silent on the issue or would not comment.

Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) officials were meeting with Barings representatives in the evening at MAS premises, said a man who answered MAS's telephone but declined to be identified.

The MAS oversees financial institutions in the tiny island state, which has been carefully cultivating its image as a regional financial centre.

Dealers on the Singapore International Monetary Exchange (SIMEX) also expect sharp drops on Monday if Barings tries to unload its remaining futures contracts on the market.

A Barings official in Hong Kong confirmed the disaster, was brought on when a derivatives trader in Singapore lost huge amounts of money on Nikkei-225 futures contracts.

Nikkei futures, based on the performance of 225 companies on Japan's stock market, are traded on SIMEX and in Osaka.

Futures dealers said, however, that they found it impossible to imagine a Barings trader having lost as much at SIMEX because of tight market surveillance at the exchange.

"To have lost \$400 million without SIMEX detecting would be impossible," a senior marketing official at a futures house said.

Dealers said what could have happened was that the trades could have been options contracts done over-the-counter, bypassing the SIMEX surveillance system.

Financial Markets

Foreign Exchange Market Summary (February 20 - February 24, 1995)

AMMAN — The dollar depreciated against other major currencies last week, especially against the mark. It ended the week 1.37 per cent lower against the mark, 0.36 per cent lower against the yen and 0.38 per cent against sterling.

The U.S. unit stabilised against the mark and the yen Monday, while rising against sterling. Reports indicated that little trading took place as many traders were absent on holiday. Comments from the U.S. Treasury Department, indicating that there was progress in securing Mexico's \$20 billion loan, did not have any impact on the dollar.

The dollar dropped sharply against European currencies Tuesday, while retreating modestly against the yen. The dollar's decline came in view of the mark's appreciation against the Italian and French currencies. The mark's appreciation against the Italian currency came despite a decision by the Bank of Italy to raise its discount rate to 8.25 per cent. Comments by Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia President Edward Boehme also contributed to the dollar's decline. Mr. Boehme said that the dollar was always of concern, but the Fed has no interest in intervening in the markets when they are working well.

The dollar continued its decline against the yen and sterling Wednesday, while stabilising against the mark. The dollar's decline came following comments by Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan before the Senate Banking Committee. Mr. Greenspan indicated that there were signs the U.S. economy was slowing and that the Fed might hold its monetary policy unchanged for a while. He also indicated that the Fed might ease, under certain circumstances in the future.

The dollar declined against other major currencies Thursday, as it suffered from a decline in U.S. bond prices. The dollar was reported to have appreciated during trading hours as a result of traders' reaction to further comments by Mr. Greenspan who emphasised his desire to see a strong dollar.

At the end of the week, the dollar continued its depreciation against the mark, in view of the mark's rise against a number of major European currencies. The German currency reached a record high against the Italian and Spanish currencies and rose against the yen and Swiss franc, influenced by inflow of funds to Germany. Meanwhile, unconfirmed reports indicated that a number of European central banks have intervened in the market to support their currencies against the mark, including the Italian and Spanish central banks.

The U.S. unit, thus ended the week at 1.4610 marks, 96.95 yen and at \$1.5885 to sterling.

New York Closing Rates for Major Currencies Against the U.S. Dollar

Currency	17/2/95 Close	24/2/95 Close	Percent Change
Sterling Pound*	1.5825	1.5885	0.38%
Deutsche Mark	1.4810	1.4610	1.37%
Swiss Franc	1.2525	1.2453	0.58%
French Franc	5.1540	5.1485	0.11%
Japanese Yen	97.30	96.95	0.36%

* USD Per STD

Euro-Currency Interest Rates*

Currency	17/2/1995 1-Month (%)	17/2/1995 1-Year (%)	24/2/1995 1-Month (%)	24/2/1995 1-Year (%)
U.S. Dollar	5.90	6.87	5.92	6.68
Sterling Pound	6.44	7.68	6.43	7.62
Deutsche Mark	4.75	5.58	4.88	5.63
Swiss Franc	3.50	4.38	3.50	4.35
French Franc	5.43	6.58	5.56	6.63
Japanese Yen	2.18	2.37	2.18	2.37

Interest rates are for London, unless otherwise specified. * U.S. Dollar, 100,000 or equivalent.

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.6948	0.6960
Sterling Pound	1.1013	1.1068
Deutsche Mark	0.4745	0.4769
Swiss Franc	0.5573	0.5601
French Franc	0.1347	0.1354
Japanese Yen*	0.7152	0.7188
Dutch Guilder	0.4231	0.4252
Swedish Krona	0.0424	0.0426
Italian Lira*	0.0424	0.0426
Belgian Franc	0.0424	0.0426

* Per 100

★ PEOPLE who missed the deadline for obtaining their subsidy coupons for rice, sugar and milk have been given a grace period. The grace period begins from March 6 until March 31. An official source at the Ministry of Supply revealed that about 100,000 people will be dropped from the list of beneficiaries next year as their salaries have been found to be in excess of JD 500 per month (Al Ra'i).

★ IT SEEMS that the negotiations which started two months ago between representatives of the Arab Bank Ltd. management and the employees' committee have reached a dead end. According to the members of the committee, the management's representatives were indecisive and could not make a definite commitment, meaning that the final decision was a centralised one. The head of the association for banks' employees said the association will be formally taking the case to find a solution for the conflict. More than 1,600 Arab Bank employees are seeking higher salaries and more fringe benefits (Al Ra'i).

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET					
HOUSING BANK CHARTER AMMAN - SHARAFIYAH					
TELEPHONE: 660170 / 663170					
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 26/02/1995					
COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	VALUE TRADED JD	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	TRADING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
ARAB BANK PLC	200	38000	189.000	190.000	
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	11075	49744	4.500	4.480	
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK / NEW	758	3275	4.320	4.320	
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	250	688	2.750	2.750	
JORDAN KOWAT BANK	3856	11593	3.000	3.000	
JORDAN GULF BANK	6600	9109	1.390	1.380	
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	12439	48489	3.950	3.900	
UNION BANK FOR SAVING & INVESTMENT	12000	58800	5.100	4.900	
BUSINESS BANK	5000	17600	3.520	3.520	
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	550	2250	4.090	4.090	
NEW JORDAN SAVING & INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	150	540	3.600	3.600	
AMMAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	12000	15430	1.290	1.280	
BANKS SECTOR					
		64888	256617	INDEX NUMBER: 161.87	CHANGE: +0.25%
ARABIAN SEAS INSURANCE	350	700	1.900	2.000	
HEIZA INSURANCE	250	373	1.420	1.490	
INSURANCE SECTOR					
		600	1073	INDEX NUMBER: 137.16	CHANGE: +0.21%
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	4355	6788	1.550	1.560	
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER / NEW	9500	14133	1.490	1.490	
JORDAN POWER & TOWERS	1000	5853	5.700	5.900	
THE JORDAN POWERED MILLS	2873	21966	7.700	7.630	
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRIES	5477	25567	4.690	4.680	
THE JORDAN PIPE MANUFACTURING	1100	2950	2.700	2.680	
THE PUBLIC MILKING	200	570	2.850	2.850	
RAPIA INDUSTRIES	1750	5057	2.910	2.880	
DAR AL DANA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	3602	44614	7.970	7.970	
ARAB INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE	8075	10275	1.270	1.270	
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	4150	3136	760	770	
ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	2700	3877	1.420	1.440	
INTERNATIONAL PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	300	705	2.390	2.350	
NATIONAL CARBS & WIRE MANUFACTURING	1000	4750	4.800	4.750	
THE JORDAN CENTER FOR PLASTIC & CHEMICALS	2400	6290	2.620	2.620	
UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES	750	3119	4.180	4.150	
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO.	5030	10482	2.080	2.080	
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR					
		58689	203373	INDEX NUMBER: 124.40	CHANGE: -0.19%
GRAND TOTAL		162153	544940	INDEX NUMBER: 144.25	CHANGE: +0.07%
NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET				71459	
VALUE TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET				87663	

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Angry Agassi ousted by Enqvist

PHILADELPHIA (Agencies) — Reigning U.S. and Australian Open Champion Andre Agassi lost his temper here Saturday.

As a result, the ATP's number two-ranked player also lost his first match of 1995 and was fined \$2,350.

Agassi hurled his racket four times, slammed a ball at a linesman and argued at length with umpire Carlos Bernades of Brazil during a 7-6 (7-5), 5-7, 6-2 loss to Sweden's Thomas Enqvist in the U.S. Indoor Championship semi-finals.

"I got distracted between my temper and feuding with the umpire," Agassi said. "I think it caused me to lose the third set."

Hard-serving Enqvist advanced to the final against defending champion Michael Chang, who needed only 51 minutes to eliminate Paul Haarhuis 6-2, 6-0 in the other semi-final. Chang will match his career-best ranking of fourth by winning the \$700,000 event.

Agassi stole the show by acting like the angry young man of bygone days. Instead of moving closer to world number one Pete Sampras, Agassi stunned himself at his own fury.

"It was surprising," he said. "I usually don't get like this. I got a bit more upset than I normally do."

The opportunity to gain ground on Sampras hurt Agassi more than the fine. Agassi made \$30,000 for reaching the semi-finals here. The winner receives \$110,000.

The tantrums began in the first-set tie-breaker. Agassi smashed a ball at a linesman after a disputed call that made the score 3-3. The action toppled the serve radar monitor and cost Agassi \$350.

After Agassi was wide with a backhand on the final point, he tossed his racket and toppled a vase of roses

on a table behind the umpire's chair. That cost Agassi a \$500 fine.

Agassi was two points from losing in the second set before winning 12 straight points, then breaking Enqvist's serve a second time to take the set.

In the third set, Agassi tossed his racket twice and later yelled at Bernades after he did not over-rule a linesman, scratching his rear to end a conversation.

After losing the final point, Agassi threw his racket into the umpire's chair stand and was booed as he walked off the court. That cost him \$1,500.

"You can always make excuses for why you lose your temper, but there is none," a somewhat apologetic Agassi said.

"I think it's understandable. I certainly don't condone it. But I would be lying if I said I wasn't going to get angry again."

Agassi's loss snapped a 15-match win streak and doubled the number of sets he has lost this year.

Enqvist, who had 18 aces, also beat Agassi in their only prior meeting, a first-round match of the 1993 U.S. Open.

"It's an unbelievable feeling to beat the guy is number two in the world," Enqvist said. "It was very exciting. I got a little tight in the second set but I played well in the third."

Enqvist said he was not disrupted by Agassi's actions, but added that he was also unhappy with some calls. "There were a lot of bad calls," he said. "I understand his frustration."

Chang won his final 11 games to beat Dutch rival Haarhuis in a rematch of last year's U.S. Indoor final. Haarhuis struggled through 24 unforced errors, three times as many as Chang.

"He looked very sluggish," Chang said. "It was not the



Andre Agassi

Paul Haarhuis I'm used to seeing."

Chang, who turned 23 last Wednesday, broke Haarhuis twice and lost only six games in the final five games of the first set.

"I wasn't looking ahead, even after that," Chang said. "I came out for the match thinking there were going to be a lot of tough rallies and long points."

Instead, Chang got a breather. Haarhuis, who won his first ATP title last month in Jakarta, could not match Chang's deep groundstrokes and steady returns.

"He didn't miss a shot," Haarhuis said. He moved me all around the court on his service games and made every return on my service games. When you play a guy like that, you're struggling to survive."

Stich, Krawieck reach final

As soon as he got up Saturday, Boris Becker knew it was going to be a hard day.

At least the torture was over quickly.

The top-seeded Becker suffered one of his most embarrassing defeats at home, losing 6-0, 6-3 to fellow German and rival Michael Stich in the semi-finals of the Eurocard Open.

"My legs couldn't carry me anymore. I was tight when I woke up, I was stiff and I knew that it was going to be a tough day in the office," Becker said.

Stich's victory in 64 minutes took him to a clash in the final against Richard Krajicek, the big-serving Dutchman who rolled past qualifier Martin Damm of the Czech Republic 6-2, 6-3.

Krajicek served a dozen aces in his 53-minute victory and dominated almost as thoroughly as Stich.

The \$2.25-million tournament is one of the most lucrative on the tour and the winner will collect \$395,000.

Stich, the No. 5 seed, had never beaten Becker in five previous indoor encounters.

But he seized control from the start and handed Becker one of his most humiliating defeats. The victory resembled Stich's 6-1, 6-1 triumph over Becker on clay in the semi-finals of the 1992 German Open in Hamburg.

Becker, a three-time Wimbledon champion who lost to Stich in the final there in 1991, won only 10 points in the first set. When he won his first game, at 3-1 in the second, he raised his arms in mock triumph.

"I was really worried that I was going to lose 6-0, 6-0," Becker said.

"He was unbelievable in the first nine games, he was great."

Stich was elated with one-sided victory over the player who remains more popular in Germany and with whom he has often feuded.

"I played a perfect match. It was one of those days when you touch the ball it goes where you want it to go," said Stich, who has dropped from No. 2 in the world to

No. 9.

Becker, ranked third, had his first break points at the start of the second set but wasted both. Just as he dropped the first set with a double-fault, he did the same to lose his serve in the second game.

"That was really the decisive moment," Stich said.

Becker had two more break points in the fifth game and two more in the last game, but he failed to convert any of them.

Stich closed the match with his ace No. 9. Becker had only two and committed six double-faults to Stich's four.

After losing in the first round of the Australian Open, Becker moved to the European indoor circuit, teaming up with Stich to carry Germany past Croatia in the Davis Cup, winning in Marseille, and losing in the final in Milan.

"I am very fit at the moment but I've played a lot of singles and doubles in the last four weeks," Becker said.

ATHLETICS ROUNDUP

Christie suffers 1st defeat of year

BIRMINGHAM (R) — Darren Braithwaite handed Olympic and world 100 metres champion Linford Christie his first defeat of the year Saturday when he sped to victory in the 60 metres at an international indoor meeting.

After a brilliant start, Braithwaite forged ahead of fellow-Briton Christie and world 200 metres champion Frankie Fredericks of Namibia to record a personal best of 6.54 seconds.

"I'm just amazed," said Braithwaite whose time was only 0.03 of a second outside world 100 metres record holder Leroy Burrell's stadium record.

"It's fantastic to do it at a meeting like this. I just can't believe it. I did 6.58 last week so I knew I was in shape but this is just amazing."

An equally surprised Christie was 0.01 of a second behind with Fredericks third one-hundredth of a second slower.

Despite the defeat Christie, who has just returned from Germany where he has had a back injury treated, confirmed he had changed his mind and would now compete over 60 metres at next month's world indoor championships in Barcelona.

Christie broke the world 200 metres indoor record in Ljvlin, France, earlier this month.

Braithwaite's training partner John Regis, who ran out of lane during Christie record-breaking run, was disqualified again on Sunday after finishing first in the 200.

Venuste Niyongabo of Burundi offered a glimpse of the future for indoor 3,000 metres running when he out-classed the world record holder Moses Kitanui of Kenya.

Niyongabo clocked the third fastest time ever of seven minutes 37.82 seconds on this debut at the distance, covering the final 200 metres in 27.25 seconds.

"I could have run another 3,000 metres now," he said. "I could go under 7:30 easily but it's too late this season."

Niyongabo has just two races left indoors — in Stockholm on Monday over 1,000 metres and Sindelfingen, Germany, over 1,500 — before returning to his Italian training base.

Europe's leading women's sprinter Irina Privalova of Russia took the 60 metres easily in 7.07 seconds. Only Jamaican Merlene Ottey and Privalova, herself, have gone faster this season.

"I could have gone faster if there had been two races not here," complained Privalova. "It's better for everyone to have two races."

Pleased to beat Ottey's stadium record by 0.05, she confirmed she would be running the 400 metres at the world indoors next month.

"I have now won the 60 metres and the 200 metres and I would like to win the 400 metres as well in a world record time," she said.

Olympic champion Ellen Van Langen of the Netherlands, whose career has been disrupted by injury since her win at the 1992 Barcelona games, won the women's 800 metres in 2:01.79.

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Blackburn stretch lead

LONDON (AFP) — Blackburn Rovers stretched their lead at the top of the Premiership to three points despite being held to a goalless draw by Norwich on Saturday as second-placed Manchester United suffered only their second defeat in 20 league matches at Everton.

A second-half goal by Scotland international Duncan Ferguson consigned United to only their fifth Premiership defeat of the season and provided a much-needed boost for the Merseysiders in their desperate struggle against relegation.

Ferguson, who has been a hero at Goodison Park since his four million pound arrival from Rangers at the start of the season, was a constant threat to a United side with the best defensive record in the Premiership.

He scored his eighth goal for the club with a close-range header from Andy Hinchcliffe's corner after 58 minutes to set up a victory that lifted Everton to three places and four points clear of the drop-zone.

It was United's first defeat since losing Eric Cantona for the rest of the campaign and sealed a bad week for the Old Trafford club after the Frenchman had his ban extended until October by a Football Association disciplinary committee on Friday.

As Ferguson tormented centre-backs Steve Bruce and Gary Pallister at one end, Mark Hughes six million pound striker Andy Cole passed up a number of excellent goal chances at the other.

It was the first time this season that Blackburn had failed to score in the League at Ewood Park where they have only dropped seven points in 16 games this season.

BRITISH SOCCER

Norwich owed much of their success in containing Rovers to the absence of suspended striker Chris Sutton and to centre back John Newsome, who ensured that Alan Shearer did not add to his 29 goals for the season.

Despite the result Norwich manager John Deehan tipped Rovers to take the title, saying:

"My money is on them because of strikers Alan Shearer and Chris Sutton. Also, I think it is difficult for a club to win a hat-trick of titles like United."

Arsenal, who sacked George Graham in midweek following the Premier League inquiry into illegal transfer payments, made light of their problems to cruise to a comfortable 2-0 win against London rivals Crystal Palace.

Third-placed Newcastle cruised to a 3-1 St. James' Park win against Villa, thanks to two goals from Peter Beardsley after Andy Townsend had cancelled out Barry Venison's opener.

Liverpool, in fourth spot, claimed their first win at Hillsborough since 1988 with John Barnes and Steve McManaman on target after Chris Bart-Williams put Wednesday in front.

And Spurs slipped to only their third defeat under Gerry Francis with two Efan Ekoku goals earning Wimbledon a 2-1 victory at White Hart Lane.

Chelsea, who travel to FK Brugge for the first leg of the European Cup Winners' Cup quarter-final on Wednesday, earned a boost with victory at West Ham, after goals by Craig Barley and Mark Stein cancelled out Don Hutchison's opener.

But Manchester City and Leeds failed to find the target as their clash at Maine Road finished goalless.

Support growing for women's soccer despite Islamic decree

CAIRO (AFP) — Support is growing for granting official recognition to women's football in Egypt despite an Islamic decree against it, advocates say.

Egypt's television preacher Sheikh Mohammed Metwali Al Shaarawi last month declared that soccer played by women was "illicit and against the precepts of Islam because it excites the public."

Earlier this month the Egyptian Football Federation refused to recognise it officially by eight votes to six, although it did not "oppose activities and competitions to promote the sport," federation secretary Samir Zaher told AFP.

It also discreetly sends referees to matches. "The federation went into reverse and preferred for the moment not to legalise this sport for women following the debate in the press about whether it was legal under Islam," he said.

Zaher said he was "astonished that women's football is considered illicit when nobody has denounced water ballet where a woman's body is much more exposed."

Shereen Shalabi, the 21-year-old goalkeeper for the Al Ahli club, said every player wears conservative clothing. "Under their shorts they wear tight leggings to cover their knees. And some even wear headscarves," she said.

Women's volleyball, basketball and handball have been recognised in Egypt for decades, but they are not huge spectator sports.

Women's soccer teams here are composed of either five or 11 players who play for two-minute halves refereed by a man and watched by large, enthusiastic, male-dominated crowds.

"Islam encouraged people to play sports since the time of the Prophet Mohammed," according to Sahar Al Hawari, a wealthy Cairo woman who for five years has sought to promote women's soccer in Egypt.

"I say to those who issued this fatwa: Isn't it better for a girl to play football than commit sin or become a drug addict," Hawari said.

But Hawari said she is certain women's soccer will soon be recognised.

"Six members of the federation came out in favour of this sport while only two years ago we had no votes from within the federation," she said.

Hawari, who "dreams of training a powerful Egyptian women's side," has in the last two years financed the training of more than 100 female players in 10 clubs in Cairo, Alexandria and other areas.

"For the first time this year, I convinced businessmen to sponsor teams. This will bring them profits because women's matches have a big following in Egypt," she said.

Hawari also said she was satisfied with the "moral support" given to the sport by the chairman of the state-run superior council of youth and sports, Abdel Menem Emara.

In Tunisia and Morocco women's football is already official.

Winter University Games end

JACA (AP) — The 17th Winter University Games ended in a flurry of 12 medals events Saturday, bringing to a close the week-long competition in the Spanish Pyrenees that drew a record of almost 800 athletes from 40 countries.

Two world records were set during the Games by the powerful South Korean short-track speedskaters, who used their medal haul in that event to finish second in the medal standings behind Russia.

Russia finished atop the unofficial medal table with seven gold medals and 14 overall. South Korea picked up six gold and 14 overall and Japan took three gold and also won 14.

China had three gold and 10 overall and France had two golds and a total of eight.

The United States finished with two golds and six overall, its lowest total in these games since taking home seven in 1987. The Americans won medals in figure and speedskating and drew blanks elsewhere. They did manage six medals in the demonstration sport of snowboarding.

South Korea and China owe their strong finishes to the short-track where they won 23 of the 30 medals with essentially the same teams they will field at next month's short-track world championships in Norway.

In Saturday's final events, South Korea's Chae Ji-Hoon won his third gold of the games with a 3,000-metre victory to go with gold medals in the 1,000 and 1,500.

Chae, the world record holder at 3,000, won a tactical race with second going to American Olympic medalist Eric Flaim — the first medal in short-track for the Americans after being shutout in the first two days of racing.

er's diamond length posed a problem and the defense was quick to try to exploit it.

West led the king and ace of diamonds then, after East completed an echo, continued with a third round of the suit. Key survived the first hurdle when he elected to ruff with dummy's queen. East discarded the deuce of clubs.

Most players would, at this point, lead a trump. West would win the ace and play a fourth diamond and East would overruff dummy for the setting trick.

To prevent that, Kay led three rounds of spades, discarding the diamond from hand. Now a trump could be led safely and the ace was the third and last trick for the defense.

What if East had discarded a spade on the third diamond, then ruffed the third round of spades? Declarer would still get home by overruffing and leading a trump, drawing East's remaining king. The last diamond could then be ruffed on the table or discarded on a spade, depending on West's defense.

GOREN BRIDGE

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NORTH

♠ A Q J 9 3

♥ Q 2

♦ Q 6

♣ A 8 4

WEST

♠ 8 5 2

♥ A 7 6

♦ A K J 10 5

♣ Q J

EAST

♠ 7 6 4

♥ 8 5

♦ 8 2

♣ 10 9 7 5 3 2

SOUTH

♠ K 10

♥ J 10 9 3

♦ 7 4 3

♣ A 6

The bidding:

West North East South

1 ♠ 1 ♠ 2 ♠ 2 ♠

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Opening lead: King of

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Sitting South, Kay became declarer at four hearts after West had opened the bidding with one diamond. While there are only three fast losers for North-South, declar-

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Robert De Niro & Nick Nolte in Cape Fear Shows: 12:30, 3:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30		Home Alone II Shows: 12:30, 2:30, 8:30, 10:30		CONCORD '1' BAD GIRLS Shows: 12:30, 3:00, 8:15, 10:30 CONCORD '2' SPEED		Mousa Hijazin "Sumaah" in the political comedy "Hi Citizen" Author and Director: Mohammad Al Shawaqfeh Daily starting 8:30 p.m. Monday is the weekly holiday	Presents Abu Awwad In the social comedy Punctured Bag The theatre is closed on Mondays Tickets are available all day	Presents: The political satire: AL SALAM YA SALAM at 8:30 p.m. For reservation, please call 625155 The theatre is closed on Saturdays & Sundays



Houston Rockets centre Hakeem 'the dream' Olajuwon makes a hasty shot under double coverage from two opponents (AFP photo)

Olajuwon leads Rockets past Warriors

HOUSTON (R) — Hakeem 'the dream' Olajuwon, 'the glide', and now 'Mr. Spark'. How are you going to beat these guys? The Golden State Warriors are still working on it.

Sam Cassell came off the bench to score 11 of his 13 points and three 3-pointers in the fourth quarter as the Houston Rockets held off the Warriors 112-105 on Saturday.

"I like being 'the Spark', said Cassell, who also contributed a career-high 16 assists. "Everybody in the NBA wants to start, but this is nice. I'm Mr. Spark."

Hakeem 'the dream' Olajuwon finished with 38 points and 15 rebounds and Robert Horry added 16 points, 10 assists and eight rebounds for the NBA-champion Rockets.

Olajuwon missed his first six shots, but recovered to make 13 of his next 15 shots. "The dream isn't anything to joke around with," said Golden State's Victor Alexander, who had the job of trying to stop Olajuwon. "He started out weak, but I knew it wouldn't last long, and it didn't."

Latrell Sprewell scored 30 points and Tim Hardaway added 24 points and eight assists for the Warriors, who have lost five of their last seven games. The Rockets have beaten the Warriors nine straight times dating back to January 2, 1993.

"We played a hell of a basketball game, except for the end," said Golden State coach Bob Lanier. "When we get better, we'll learn how to execute in crunch time. We're trying to learn how to play smart basketball, but they're a good team. I can't really complain about losing to them."

"(The Warriors) always seem to play very relaxed against the Rockets," Houston's Clyde 'the glide' Drexler said. "Maybe because they don't have anybody to guard Hakeem and they don't even try."

Drexler finished with 22 points, seven rebounds and

six assists for the Rockets, who amassed a season-high 44 assists. Houston improved to 5-2 since acquiring Drexler from Portland for Otis Thorpe earlier this month. In a battle for Los Angeles, Loy Vaught scored 27 points as the host Clippers held off a furious fourth-quarter rally to edge the Lakers 83-81.

Nick Van Exel's layup brought the Lakers within 83-81 with 29.8 seconds to play. After a Clipper miss, the Lakers had three chances to tie the game as Van Exel, Sedale Threatt and Lloyd Daniels all missed shots in the final 11.6 seconds.

Lamond Murray added 17 points for the Clippers (10-45) and in last place in the Pacific Division, who beat the third-place Lakers (34-18) for the second time in five encounters this season.

Vlade Divac scored 10 of his 20 points in the fourth quarter for the Lakers and Van Exel added 16. The Lakers lost for the second time in their last 10 games.

The Lakers outscored the Clips 29-16 in the fourth quarter — exactly the opposite result of the third quarter.

In Cleveland, Danny Ferry hit a 3-pointer with 12 seconds remaining to lift the injury-riddled Cavaliers to a 105-102 victory over the New Jersey Nets, sweeping the season series.

Ferry finished a career-high 24 points for Cleveland, which was playing without four of its starters.

Tony Campbell scored 13 of his season-high 23 points in the fourth quarter for the Cavaliers, who closed within a half-game of the first-place Charlotte Hornets in the Central Division.

Christ Morris scored a season-high 31 points and Jayson Williams added a career-high 20 for the Nets, who have dropped three of their last four games.

Cleveland was playing without injured Mark Price, Tyrone Hill, Bobby Phills

RESULTS

Washington	102	Sacramento	98
Cleveland	105	New Jersey	102
Houston	112	Golden State	105
L.A. Clippers	83	L.A. Lakers	81

Boxer extremely critical after brain operation

Surgeon: McClellan has 'good chance' of survival

LONDON (R) — American boxer Gerald McClellan has a "good chance of survival" said John Sutcliffe, the neuro-surgeon who performed a life-saving operation on him in the early hours of Sunday morning.

McClellan collapsed with a blood clot on the brain after being stopped in the 10th round of his World Boxing Council super-middleweight title fight against Britain's Nigel Benn on Saturday night.

Amid new calls for a ban on boxing after the 10-round World Boxing Council bout, surgeons operated through the night to remove a blood clot from McClellan's brain.

A hospital official at the Royal London Hospital said he was heavily sedated and on a life-support machine in the hospital's trauma unit and was "likely to remain in this condition for some time."

The hospital said it was too soon to say how much damage McClellan may have sustained. It said his family had been made aware of the seriousness of his condition and were expected to fly into London from the United States later on Sunday.

A British sports official called for the sport to be banned, saying it was for boxers and a bad influence on children.

McClellan collapsed in the ring in the 10th round shortly after being counted out. He was giving oxygen, his neck was put in a brace and he was removed by stretcher from the ring and taken to hospital.

Benn was also taken to hospital to have his jaw checked after three board doctors feared it may have been broken, but he was later released.

It had been a surprising performance by Benn, who



U.S. boxer Gerald McClellan being carried off a stretcher Saturday after he was counted out in the 10th round of his WBC super-middleweight fight against Britain's Nigel Benn

was widely expected to succumb to McClellan's monster punches.

Defending his title for the seventh time, Benn looked down and out when he was knocked through the ropes in a brutal opening round. But he rode the punches and made a remarkable recovery in the second.

In the ninth round, McClellan sank of his feet, claiming a head butt, which seemed to be all the incentives the desperately tired Benn needed.

McClellan, who had never

previously been beyond eight rounds, went down for a count of seven in the 10th and after another right immediately went down for a full count.

He then lay prone as Benn celebrated and was taken from the ring on a stretcher.

James Ty, director general of the British Safety Council, told Britain's GMTV that the fight had been an especially vicious one.

"I'm a little bit horrified because right from the beginning of the fight there wasn't much boxing about it. Really

it was one bloke trying to injure the other bloke's brain," he said.

"People don't understand this but what's really happening with boxing, the brain in like a blancmange," he said, comparing it to a rubbery pudding.

"Every time this evening, and hundreds of times it occurred, the blow is struck, the brain cracks against the inside of the hard skull, and it has the effect of numbing the brain or causing permanent brain damage."

John Sutcliffe, the neuro-surgeon who operated on McClellan, said bluntly after examining the boxer: "His brain was quite swollen, how we would expect a brain to look after it's been punched for (10) rounds. Hopefully it will not prove too serious but it will end his fighting career and it will kill him if it's (the clot) not taken out."

Tye said he would ask the government to ban "this so-called sport."

"All kinds of changes have been made but really the answer is to ban it," he said.

Williams faces questions over Senna death

ROME (R) — Formula One motor racing team boss Frank Williams faces questioning by Italian prosecutors over the crash in which world champion Ayrton Senna was killed at the San Marino Grand Prix last year.

Prosecutors must decide whether to recommend pressing manslaughter charges against 17 people including Williams, his technical director Patrick Head and officials of the Sagis Company that runs the Imola Race Track.

"I will have to speak to the representatives of the Williams team again following the conclusions of the experts' report," Maurizio Passarini, the investigating magistrate heading the inquiry, told the Gazzetta Dello Sport newspaper on Sunday.

"I don't know when it will be possible. April 30, the date of the San Marino Grand Prix, seems too far

away.

"The important thing is to get back in contact and arrange a meeting, if they want one. But I think they will because it is to their advantage."

The inquiry follows the death of three-times world

champion Senna in a crash during the San Marino Grand Prix at Imola on May 1 last year. Austrian Roland Ratzenberger died in a 300 kph crash in final practice the previous day.

The report into the deaths, the first in Formula One for

12 years, said that the steering of Senna's Williams car failed as he approached the Tamborello curve on the seventh lap.

Williams mechanics had modified the steering column after the driver had complained of being cramped in

the cockpit.

But Williams' lawyers have disputed the version of events given in the report commissioned by the prosecutors. "Our data shows that the steering was working until the moment of impact," said lawyer Roberto Causo.

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Mass 'civilian' graves in Grozny

GROZNY (Agencies) — Amid continued heavy fighting near Grozny, a newspaper on Sunday reported the discovery of two open mass graves in the secessionist capital containing the bodies of more than 100 Chechens.

The Observer of London said most of the dead appeared to be civilians, including some women and children, in the open trenches between Grozny's central graveyards and a main road. It said there were fresh bodies among the mostly decomposing corpses, and some were clearly victims of exploding shells while others looked relatively unscathed.

Survivors of the two-month Russian bombardment of the city reportedly visited the grisly site in search of missing relatives.

There were no immediate reports Sunday on the hostilities in the Grozny area, where fierce clashes occurred the day before as Russian forces tried to encircle the city.

The Russian government, which portrays the fighting in Grozny as being in the mop-up stage, said First Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Soskovets would visit Grozny and Russia's command base of Mordok early in the week. The visit is connected with plans to rebuild war-battered Chechnya and restore its economy, an unidentified government spokesman told Russian news agencies.

Russian army officials in Mordok said an electrical short circuit triggered the explosion in the southern outskirts of Grozny on Saturday that killed at least 25 Russian servicemen.

Those killed in the explosion included 20 members of

the Omon, or special riot police squads.

The blast resulted from a short circuit in a remote-control device used to detonate mines, an unidentified Russian spokesman in Mordok told the ITAR-TASS news agency.

On Saturday, a pall of black smoke clouded the skies southwest of Grozny after oil refinery installations were hit. Refugees said there had been battles in the area since Friday.

The main thrust of the Russian offensive was directed southwest, to the part of the wrecked capital still held by Chechen fighters.

Interfax reported heavy shelling of rebel positions in Grozny after its stubborn defenders, at one point, appeared to have driven Russian troops back from a key road.

Apartment buildings were in flames, it said, and civilians were either fleeing or hiding in cellars.

There were also reports of clashes in villages south and west of Grozny, areas still under Chechen control 11 weeks after Russian troops marched in to crush Chechnya's self-proclaimed independence.

Explosions could be heard every few minutes in Urus-Martan, 10 kilometres south of the Rostov-Baku highway, a vague frontier.

Several hundred people gathered in a field to hear an official of the pro-Russian Chechen opposition. He relayed Russian promises that Urus-Martan would be spared from bombings so long as it harboured no fighters.

(Continued on page 3)



Bangladeshi U.N. peacekeepers struggle to keep Somalis away from Mogadishu seaport (AFP photo)

Two weeklies ordered suspended

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The director of the Press and Publications Department (PPD), Mohammad Amin, Sunday decided to suspend the publication of two weeklies on the basis that their chief editors do not meet all the requirements set in the law.

Publishers of the two newspapers contested the decision and charged that it was part of a campaign launched against them.

The Monday newspapers, Hawadeth Al Sa'ah (events of the hour) and Al Bilad (the country), will not appear

today. But they "will be able to start reprinting as soon as their chief editors obtain the legal status or as soon as new chief editors who meet the legal requirements are appointed," according to Mr. Amin.

In a letter sent on Sunday to the two tabloids — a copy of which was also sent to Al Dostour publishing house where the two papers are regularly printed — Mr. Amin called on the two periodicals "to stop their publication until their status is corrected in accordance with the law."

But the publishers of the two weeklies said the newly-

appointed chief editors have been accepted as Jordan Press Association (JPA) members and have obtained their membership cards in August.

"But they were not sworn in," said Mr. Amin.

According to Mr. Amin, Yusuf Ghishan and Jamal Shawahin, who were appointed last month as chief editors of Al Bilad and Hawadeth Al Sa'ah respectively, replacing Nidal Mansour and Ruba Karasneh, applied last year for JPA membership and were accepted as members, but so far did not take the oath.

"They cannot be considered full members until they take the oath," said Suleiman Qudah, the JPA president.

The swearing-in ceremony will take place after the 'Eid,' Mr. Qudah said.

The publisher of Al Bilad, Nayef Tourah, said swearing-in was not a prerequisite according to the law. He said that Mr. Amin's decision was only a pretext to put pressure on the two tabloids because they publish news that are not in line with the government's policies.

"I would call it (the decision) a regression from democracy," Mr. Tourah said.

(Continued on page 7)

Somalis battle outside U.N. base

MOGADISHU (Agencies)

— Somali militias fought fiercely on Sunday outside the gates of the U.N.-controlled airport, where U.S. and Italian troops prepared for evacuation of U.N. peacekeeping forces.

A mortar bomb, apparently a stray round, slammed into the runway. Gunmen fired bursts of anti-aircraft gunfire at each other some bullets whizzed over the heads of dozens of U.S. and Italian forces inside the airfield, witnesses said.

It was not clear what the fighting was about, but tension mounted during Sunday as crowds of Somalis and gunmen gathered around the airfield gates as the countdown began for the withdrawal of U.N. forces.

Carloads of Somali militiamen could be seen speeding towards the scene of the fighting, which flared sporadically.

Foreign troops at the airport appeared not to have returned fire on the Somalis.

The U.N. Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) is set to hand over command to U.S. Marine Lieutenant-General Tony Zinni on Tuesday, indicating that troops will probably come ashore in the early hours of the same day.

Earlier on Sunday, mortar blasts sent a plume of dust into the sky over the city's Bermuda district, a lawless maze of streets behind the sea port where the U.S. marines will land.

Rival clans called the Abgal and Mursade have been feuding for months in Bermuda, named after the Bermuda Triangle because many who venture in never come out.

The militias have promised not to attack the U.S. and Italian troops coming ashore to pluck the rear guard of Pakistani and Bangladeshi troops, plus their military hardware, from Mogadishu's port and airport.

But at a rally in support of Mohammad Farah Aideed, the clan leader whose militias battled U.S.-led foreign troops on the streets of the capital in 1993, hundreds chanted anti-American slogans.

Mohammad Abdi Hassan, a young man gifted in the Somali tradition of oral poetry, sang verses praised the bravery of militias who had fought foreign troops in past battles.

"Those who have killed U.S. soldiers are still in Mogadishu, waiting for them like crocodiles," he sang into a microphone on a stadium before the crowds of mainly women and children.



U.S. envoy to Kenya held briefly by police

NAIROBI (R) — U.S.

Ambassador to Kenya Aurelia Brazale was held for nearly an hour at a provincial police station, Kenyan newspapers reported Sunday.

The Sunday Standard said she was detained Saturday on suspicion that she was accompanying a party of opposition MPs who had been stopped at the same roadblock near Naivasha, 80 kilometres northwest of Nairobi. Ms. Brazale told police she was on her way to visit a friend living nearby. Police questioned the ambassador and the Kenyan driver of her Mercedes Benz and telephoned Foreign Ministry officials before releasing her, the newspapers said.

"I have now experienced first-hand the curtailment of freedom of movement and association in Kenya," the Sunday Nation quoted Ms. Brazale as saying.

Burma introduces dress code to counter 'hippie' culture

RANGOON (AFP) — Burmese authorities, concerned

over the effect of "hippie" culture on youths, have issued a strict dress code for stage entertainers, state media reported. The 10-point official dress code forbids male entertainers and singers from going on stage with muddy long hair or wearing earrings. Female entertainers were warned not to wear revealing dresses or hair styles unsuitable for a Burmese audience. Religion Minister Myo Nyunt met with entertainers and restaurant and karaoke club owners and criticised them for not heeding official warnings against actions detrimental to Burmese culture, the reports in state-owned papers said.

Myo Nyunt, who also heads the Rangoon military command, called entertainment spots "veritable breeding grounds of hippie culture" and accused the entertainers and club owners of engaging in unsavoury practices. "It has come to my attention that karaoke clubs don't only confine themselves to singing, but hold illegal competitions to send girls to another country," he said without elaborating.

Myo Nyunt said public stage performances have been used as a pretext to create unrest, and warned that karaoke clubs may be closed permanently if the official warnings are not heeded. Those attending Friday's meeting gave Lieutenant General Myo Nyunt written pledges that they would strictly adhere to the new regulations, the state press reports said.

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Mohammad Abdi Hassan, a young man gifted in the Somali tradition of oral poetry, sang verses praised the bravery of militias who had fought foreign troops in past battles.

"Those who have killed U.S. soldiers are still in Mogadishu, waiting for them like crocodiles," he sang into a microphone on a stadium before the crowds of mainly women and children.

Dead Russian satellites leave trail of dangerous debris

NEW YORK (AFP) —

Radioactive debris from dead nuclear-powered spy satellites could damage working satellites orbiting the Earth, NASA officials said in a newspaper report published Sunday.

The nuclear debris could wreak havoc in a crowded orbit located 965 kilometres (600 miles) up of satellites for navigation, surveillance, weather tracking and observation of the Earth's natural resources, the officials were quoted by the New York Times as saying. "We're worried about it. It looks like it could be pretty bad," said Donald Kessler, senior scientist for the orbital debris studies at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

More love-lorn Indians commit suicide — report

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Unrequited love is causing more Indians to commit suicide, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported Sunday. "The incidence of suicide due to disappointment in love affairs rose by 79.3 per cent from 1,514 in 1989 to 2,714 in 1993," the news agency quoted a report by the National Crime Records Bureau as saying. Other causes of suicides were infection by dreadful diseases, bankruptcy and family quarrels, the bureau said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Arafat bans paper after criticism

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Yasser Arafat has banned newspaper which backs his self-rule authority after it criticised Jordan, Palestinian officials said Sunday. Samih Samara, the editor-in-chief of the banned Al Rased daily, was unavailable for comment. Al Rased is affiliated to the Voice of Palestine, the Palestinian Authority's broadcasting service which also puts out two other daily political publications. These have not been banned.

New Shin Beth chief takes office

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The new head of Israel's internal intelligence agency, the Shin Beth, a specialist on Jewish extremism, took office on Sunday a government spokesman announced. The 44-year-old, known by the code-name "K", was promoted from deputy of the Shin Beth, which leads the undercover fight against subversion. The identity of his predecessor, "Y", who has retired, was due to be revealed Monday. The Shin Beth and its external counterpart Mossad, are controlled directly by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin with a joint budget of \$350 million, according to finance ministry figures. K worked his way up through the ranks from a security agent in Israeli representative offices around the world to a district chief on the West Bank. When his appointment was made public a week ago, hardline settler leaders protested about the man who has played a major part in the crackdown on their activities. A settlers' attempt to block his appointment in the supreme court was thrown out last week.

Hassan II signals formation of new government

RABAT (AFP) — King Hassan II signalled the imminence of a new Moroccan government late Saturday when he discharged 11 ministers and six junior ministers from their posts. The officials are all "technocrats" who have been in office since June last year, a government statement said. At the end of last month the king reconfirmed Prime Minister Abdul Latif Filali in his position and told him to begin consultations with right-wing parties in parliament on a new cabinet. The right is being returned to power after the failure of an attempt to have an alternation with the left-leaning opposition, which refused to govern with powerful Interior Minister Driss Basri. The king refused to dump Mr. Basri and talks with the left broke down at the end of last year. Among those discharged Saturday were the ministers of justice, public works, transport, posts and telecommunications, housing, tourism, health, finance, education, employment and culture.

Aftershocks expected in Cyprus for another week

NICOSIA (AFP) — Aftershocks are likely to hit Cyprus for another week following the earthquake that killed two people late Thursday, a seismology official said. A tremor measuring 5.2 degrees on the Richter scale killed an elderly couple and injured six people near Paphos in the western part of the island where it also destroyed several dozen homes in some 20 mountain villages. "The behaviour and mechanism are similar to the 1953" quake, which measured 6.2 degrees on the Richter scale and killed 64 people, Kyriakos Solomitis told AFP. Aftershocks from that lasted for more than a month. The aftershocks from Thursday's quake are likely to last only a week because it was less strong, he said. In the period since Thursday, "4.0 and 3.5 degree aftershocks were registered, some on land and some offshore," he said. But most houses were strong enough to withstand jolts. There was "no damage to brick and concrete houses built over the last 30 years" in Thursday's quake, he said. Only old houses built loosely with stone collapsed.

Lebanese businessman murdered in Egypt

CAIRO (AP) — Colombia's honorary consul in Lebanon was murdered in Cairo last week after a disagreement with a business associate, police officials said Sunday. Edgar Madardi, a Lebanese, owned a successful factory in Egypt which manufactures anti-mosquito pellets. The officials said he was shot dead outside his factory by a businessman who blamed Madardi for his bankruptcy. His alleged murderer, who was not identified by name, was arrested. The police officials, who could not be further identified, said the murder was a criminal act and was not related to Madardi's post as honorary consul. Madardi's body was flown back to Beirut Saturday, and a memorial service was planned Monday.

Zhirinovsky wants anti-West coalition

BAGHDAD (Agencies)

— Russian ultra-nationalist leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky said on Sunday he wanted Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to join in forging a coalition against the West.

Mr. Zhirinovsky, looking lively despite a 15-hour bus ride across the desert from Jordan, also told reporters on arrival in the Iraqi capital that he would work for lifting the U.N. sanctions imposed on Iraq for its invasion of Kuwait.

"I take with me an appeal to Muslims and Arabs, seven pages. I would like to give this appeal to Mr. Saddam Hussein," Mr. Zhirinovsky said.

"The West would like the Muslim World (to be) against Russia, against Orthodox... so it is no good for Russia, for Orthodox countries and Muslim countries."

He told reporters the document called for Arabs and Muslims to join with Orthodox Christians in a coalition and said he was ready to sign if President Saddam agreed to do so. The appeal also called for friendship between Russia and the Muslim World.

Mr. Zhirinovsky, heading a 50-person delegation which travelled by bus because of a ban on flights to Baghdad, accused the West of fomenting strife and wars between Muslims and Orthodox Russians, notably in Chechnya.

But he lashed out at Turkey, a secular Muslim state, for its "violation of human rights."

He accused Ankara of "everyday bombardment" of ethnic Kurds in southeastern Turkey, where the separatist Kurdish Labour Party has been fighting the government.

Algerian villagers become vigilantes

ALGIERS (Agencies)

— A group of villagers who organised themselves into a self-defence force killed the head of an Islamic extremist group in revenge for the murders of three of their people, newspapers reported Sunday.

Si Mohammed Mustapha was killed Friday during an exchange of fire between a group of eight extremists and a posse set up by more than 200 villagers in the Bouamaane forest in the Kabylie mountains in northern Algeria, they said.

Encouraged by Algerian security forces, the villagers from the Azeffoun area had organised a hunt for the armed band following the killing of a taxidriver from the village of Tighrine and two men aged 60 and 70.

They opened fire as soon as they saw the gang, killing its leader and injuring other

members of the group, who had fled to flee. Stolen vehicles, provisions, and home-made bombs were found in the gang's store, according to the papers.

Several villagers in the Kabylie region have formed self-defence groups under the banner of the Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD) after attacks by armed extremist groups.

A fortnight ago an armed fundamentalist gang attacked Agrib, the home village of the RCD's secretary-general, Said Sadi, killing two teachers.

Mr. Sadi is also president of the Movement for the Republic (MPR), which has asked people in towns and workplaces to form self-defence groups to protect themselves against armed gangs.

Two world bodies call on U.N. social development summit to focus on liberal economic, labour policies

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — One of the key elements to successful social development around the world is a concerted government approach to creating employment but the approach should be focused on sustainable growth as the principle source of job creation and on policies that permit free enterprise rather than state restrictions, two major international organisations say.

The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and the International Organisation of Employers (IOE), in a comment entitled "A Business Approach to the U.N. Summit for Social Development," say that the draft declaration to be submitted to the World Summit on Social Development to be held in December next month has several shortcomings.

They say that creating jobs in the matter as called for in the draft declaration should not be at the expense of technologies which allow the private sector to develop naturally and offer indirect long-term employment; nor should it be restrictive on any form of free enterprise based on economic and market conditions of the environment that business operates in.

In general, the comment appeared to be a very close

reflection of the international business community's concern that the World Summit on Social Development, expected to be one of the largest gatherings at head-of-state level, could end up indirectly encouraging policies which are not conducive to long-term development in a spirit of free market economy.

The comment, a copy of which was made available to the Jordan Times, notes that the thrust of the draft declaration is "on the primacy of social protection and the distribution of wealth as the principal goal of government policy."

"On the contrary, the focus should be on the imperative to promote sustainable growth as the principal source of job creation and, therefore, of poverty reduction and social integration," said ICC and IOE.

The comments made by the two organisations emphasise the importance of sound economic policies and outlines the elements of a growth strategy, creating productive employment, technology and competitiveness, technological cooperation, the role of the labour market and small business and job creation.

"With a more positive approach to job creation and social development... the World Summit on Social Development can

make an important contribution to the promotion of policies which generate productive employment," says the comment prepared by the two bodies.

They assert that the points included in the draft declaration "raise serious concerns to the business community."

"They do not deal with the issues which are supported by them, particularly education and training which they consider to be a fundamental element of an employment strategy," the comment says.

According to the ICC and IOE, any government approach to sound social development should include:

— A growth strategy based on stable and consistent macro-economic policy management, free of budgetary excesses and lax monetary policies. Government policies should also encourage international trade and investment in an atmosphere that promotes private investment and allows free enterprise; and the regulatory framework should be flexible so that employers as well as employees could adapt to economic change.

— Creating jobs and maintaining a compatible growth in job opportunities should be based on sustainable growth strategy rather than protecting employment which would lead to

inflationary policies and measures to support uncompetitive enterprises.

"As far as enterprises are concerned, their responsibility is to provide goods and services to the market from which jobs will flow."

The draft declaration's call on governments to promote "labour-intensive investment" and "appropriate technologies" would only result in more government intervention in the market and jeopardise a country's competitiveness and long-term development. As such, "the choice of technology by enterprises should continue to be made by business, based on productivity and linked to the economic environment they operate in," says the comment by the ICC and IOE.

"Government interventions to promote labour-intensive technology would ignore the long-term employment benefits of new technologies and the need for enterprises to choose the means of production that will allow them to remain competitive in a global market." Interim measures and special programmes to alleviate extreme poverty could be undertaken in the non-market sector of the economy.

The draft declaration includes a call for better access to new technologies without spelling out how this access could be

achieved. According to the ICC and IOE, such access "should be achieved through the opening of markets and adopting liberal trade and investment policies."

— In the labour market, government policies should be based on a liberal regulatory framework that allows part-time work, temporary work, self-employment and subcontracting suitable to employers and employees and should not include "illegitimate state interference and other serious distortions to the market."

"The aim of (labour market) policy should be to establish a flexible regulatory and legal framework which allows both employees and employers to respond effectively and quickly to changing labour requirements," the ICC-IOE comment says.

The two organisations underlined the need to help small businesses which "represent a particularly dynamic sector of the economy."

"Given their potential for employment generation and their emphasis on innovation, they must be allowed to start up and prosper in a competitive environment," they say. "The government should not burden them with excessive permit requirements, a slow-moving bureaucracy and high taxation."